



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
November 9, 1988

UMTA 14-88
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UMTA AWARDS UNIVERSITY GRANTS TO STUDY TRANSIT ISSUES

The Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) has awarded \$765,285 in federal research grants to 10 universities to study transit issues in an effort to relieve congestion and increase mobility, Administrator Alfred A. DelliBovi said today.

"The university research program is a true partnership between institutions of higher learning and public transit providers," DelliBovi said. "These grants will foster research in critical transportation areas such as suburban mobility, development of business plans for public and private transit operators, and cooperative education and internship programs."

DelliBovi said the program is particularly valuable because it encourages the development of new ideas and moves them from the drawing boards and planning departments into actual service. "The studies will help ensure that transportation enjoys a safe and healthy future," DelliBovi said.

A list of the recipients, descriptions of the studies, and the amounts of the grants includes:

(more)

University of Washington, Seattle--\$72,904

Development of a suburban employer-based customized commuting improvement and information package for individual employees in an effort to improve suburban mobility. The results from this project would make it easy for individual employers to identify the commuting patterns of their employees and to design and produce customized information packages that interpret available options to continued use of the single-occupant vehicle.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge--\$84,629

A study of intergovernmental differences in suburban corridor congestion policy designed to assist communities in seeking ways to solve their transportation problems. This study proposes to achieve its goals by splitting corridors, treating the parts differently and keeping the parts from having adverse impact on one another, proposing strong adjudicating agencies to mold corridor plans, and finding certain policies agreeable to all.

University of California, Irvine--\$76,586

Commuter network organizations seek to supplement transit organizations and reduce dependence on private automobiles by providing commuters with information on alternatives to the private automobile. This study will examine the approaches of four California commuter network organizations to the demands of their constituencies. This study will yield an adaptable model for both existing and future commuter network organizations.

Grambling State University, Grambling, LA--\$85,000

The project seeks to identify and assess the transportation modes available for the cities of Monroe, Ruston and Grambling, La. This project also strives to analyze the adequacy of transportation facilities for the elderly and low income residents of the tri-city area and attempts to open up new markets for both private and public providers of mass transit systems. The overall benefit from this research will be a redesigned and restructured transit service that will ultimately lead to improved suburban mobility.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg--\$66,311

Develop Workshop on Financial Incentive Programs (FIPs) which are tools used to promote successful improvement in employee attendance by reducing accidents, upgrading safety among employees and improving the trust between labor and management. FIPs have been shown to be effective in changing employee work behaviors, increasing productivity and encouraging the development of human resources. This training program will have a number of positive results. First, participants will develop an in-depth knowledge of FIPs. Second, participants will be able to assess the feasibility of implementing FIPs in their own transit system. Third, participants will be able to share the experiences that others have had in developing and implementing FIPs. Most important, the concept and practicability of FIPs will have been introduced to large numbers of transit managers. This should encourage further experimentation with FIPs in transit.

City University of New York--\$84,888

The purpose of the research is to identify examples of public-private competition in current New York Transit Authority (TA) operations and to pinpoint current practices and procedures that prevent the TA from routinely making full and fair comparisons of in-house and contracted work. Ultimately, the proposed research will strengthen the relationships among the TA, Baruch College and the Institute for Transportation Systems (ITS) of the City College.

Wayne State University, Detroit--\$85,000

A study of privatization of transit services between suburban communities in the Detroit Metropolitan area. The primary benefactors of this research will be transit operators who are exploring the feasibility of using private resources for meeting the transportation needs between suburban communities. Other potential beneficiaries of this study include the Metropolitan Planning Organizations, the private sector, UMTA and other agencies with interest in privatization.

University of Texas, Austin--\$69,715

This study is designed to develop a permanent process allowing transit authorities to determine the most cost effective methods of serving the variety of needs found in low density suburban areas and corridors. This will be done by matching potential transit and paratransit options to specific employment, commercial, and residential land uses patterns, and then considering the ridership implications of each service option or package of options.

Indiana University, Bloomington--\$56,516

Co-op Study and Internship Program to refine and develop the process of creating internship and co-op programs which provide university students with the opportunity to acquire actual on the job training with a public transportation operator while going to school. Ideally, the students will benefit because of a rewarding educational experience, the transit property will benefit because they will have had access to an additional employee who will have provided valuable services, and the entire transit industry should benefit because of additional talent attracted to the industry who may decide to pursue careers in public transportation.

New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark--\$83,735

Through a close, collaborative working relationship with New Jersey Transit, the New Jersey Institute of Technology expects to develop a model(s) enhancing the appeal to young professionals of career opportunities to the transit industry.

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