

FTA Awards \$7 Million for Workforce Development

APTA Partners with Rutgers on 'Virtual Career Network'

On Jan. 11, DOT Secretary Ray LaHood awarded \$7 million in FTA Innovative Transit Workforce Development Program grants for 17 projects in 11 states and the District of Columbia. APTA member organizations will administer 10 of the programs receiving funds.

This program helps local public transit agencies, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and Indian tribes train a future generation of transit professionals.

"These grants are critically important in strengthening public transit's workforce, which is the lifeblood of our industry," said APTA Chair Flora M. Castillo. "We applaud these forward-looking grants to recruit and prepare the next generation of public transit workers and help offset a wave of retirements and the loss of vital institutional knowledge over the next decade. These are just the types of projects I envisioned as part of my 'It's All About the People' initiative."

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, received a \$659,784 grant for the Transit Virtual Career Network (TVCN): Raising Awareness and Building the Transit Industry's Workforce. This project—supported by numerous partners including APTA—will build and promote a cost-effective, innovative, field-tested, national website that attracts that attracts youth, veterans, and others to the transportation industry and provide public transit agencies with access to new recruitment and training tools.

The TVCN project team, led by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, will consult

with APTA and its members on the customization of design, development, and usability of this system for targeted audiences and which jobs to feature initially. Plans are for the system to highlight about 70 jobs in the areas of operations, maintenance and facilities, including job profiles, job skills, educational needs, and where to find access to these resources to acquire and develop these skills.

Other grant recipients included:

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority: \$795,334 for a program to provide military veterans and high school students with skills training and assistance to help them transition into WMATA's bus maintenance apprenticeship programs;

The International Transportation Learning Center, Silver Spring, MD, two grants for \$722,500 and \$425,000. The larger amount will support "Career Pathways and Career Ladders for the Frontline Workforce: Innovative Models Leveraging Training Standards and Stakeholder Engagement." The other is for development of courseware for the Consortium for Signals Training; and

The Southern California Regional Transit Training Consortium, Long Beach, CA: \$673,713 for a distance learning program for transportation providers.

Public transit agencies in San Bernardino, CA; Jacksonville and Tampa, FL; Cincinnati, OH; and Corpus Christi, TX, also received funding through this program.

More information about these grants is available at www.fta.dot.gov/12351_14986.html.