



## Social Isolation Technical Assistance Opportunity

### Announcement & Solicitation of Interest

The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM), a technical assistance center funded by the Federal Transit Administration, is seeking to facilitate ground-breaking collaborations among state-level agencies within a single state or tribal nation who are interested in working together to address the positive role of transportation in reducing social isolation among older adults. State agencies can submit a letter of interest via this [link](#).

Eligible agencies include state or tribal departments of transportation, public health, aging, and similar agencies that have a role relevant to the issue.

**Issue:** The positive role of transportation in reducing social isolation among older adults, leading to improved physical and mental health outcomes for this population. This can include 1) increased access to health care destinations, 2) decreased incidence of loneliness or depression, 3) improvement in perceived happiness or quality of life, and 4) increased engagement in physical, social, and other activities that lead to improved physical or cognitive functioning), among other benefits.

For the purposes of this opportunity, transportation is defined as 1) publicly funded and nonprofit transportation available to the general public, 2) specialized transportation services for older adults and related populations, 3) shared ride taxis, 4) shared ride ride-hailing services, and 5) micromobility options (e.g., bicycles, adult tricycles, and electric scooters).

#### What NCMM will provide

- Work with the participating state/tribal agencies to explore data related to the identified focus question
- Based on the data, provide assistance in scoping the focus question so that it is actionable and progress on addressing the question is measurable
- Work with the state/tribal agencies to draft an action plan and performance measures to address the issue
- Provide funding for future projects based in the action plan.
- Match states with relevant expertise to assist in implementing the action plan.

#### What states will need to do

- Identify a lead state/tribal agency for this opportunity
- Find partners within other relevant state/tribal agencies
- Identify the focus question (see examples below) you'd like to address related to the role of transportation in reducing social isolation in older adults
- Submit a letter of interest to NCMM by September 1, 2021 via [this form](#). The letter must identify at least two committed state agencies who will participate.

Applicants will be able to frame their focus question to fit within state priorities and goals, as long as it also addresses the stated issue, above. Potential projects that have been identified, based on NCMM's recent research product [The Role of Transportation in Addressing Social Isolation in Older Adults](#), are described below. Note this list is suggestive only, and is not meant to limit a state's choice of focus question.

1. Collect data on the intersection of *publicly funded transportation* (i.e., public agency, nonprofit receiving federal funds) and meeting the social needs of older adults, including 1) measuring social isolation before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, 2) correlating the number of trips and purpose of rides with the isolation assessment. Apply the data collected to one or more pilot projects in the state/tribal nation.
2. Support communities in 1) inventorying and quantifying what type of public transportation programs, in addition to those provided through Area Agencies on Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Tribal Organizations, Centers for Independent Living, or another of the 130 federally funded programs, as well as support programs such as State Assistive Technology Act programs, may or could exist that specifically serve the needs of older adults; and 2) inventorying community locations or destinations for older adults (asset mapping) of available and accessible opportunities to be socially connected (e.g., community, senior, or tribal centers, libraries, shopping, grocery stores, farmer markets, or community gardens that provide availability of healthy foods plus physical activity opportunities, medical care services, or schools with shared-use facilities that include programming [e.g., physical activity social support programs] for older adults). Apply the data collected to one or more pilot projects in the state/tribal nation.
3. Conduct additional research, qualitative and especially quantitative, to further inform best practices in providing public transportation to older adults, including the following: 1) identify conditions/circumstances that prevent older adults from using public transportation (e.g., safety concerns, lack of accessibility, lack of or confusing signage or wayfinding aids, unpredictable pick-up or arrival and departure times); 2) different types of supports that assist older adults in using transportation, such as State Assistive Technology Act programs; and 3) how to address public perception and awareness of public transportation among older adults to reduce stigma and increase knowledge. Is it really stigma and a lack of knowledge or is it because they are not physically able to get to the stops, physically able to get on the vehicle, the schedules don't work for them, etc.? Apply the data collected to one or more pilot projects in the state.
4. Consider how state/tribal government-level agencies can help to improve collaboration between transportation, aging, urban planning, and public health, and other state-level agencies that address social determinants of health at the community level, to connect people from where they live, including in multi-unit housing, to destinations where older adults can travel to be socially active and connected. For example, how can relevant questions be addressed in Community Health Needs Assessments or Public Health Assessments to promote pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation routes to allow for older adults to safely actively commute from where they live, including multi-unit housing to where they need to go to be socially connected? Apply the data collected to one or more pilot projects in the state/tribal nation.
5. Collect and use data supported by multiple state and/or tribal nation agencies to inform policies for expanding publicly funded options for transportation nearby where older adults

live, including multi-unit housing, to destinations where they can go to be socially connected. Consider, including a variety of options (walking and bicycle routes and public transportation systems) that are available, affordable, convenient, attractive, safe, and accessible for all older adults, and that connect to destinations where older adults go to be active and socially connected (e.g., physical activity and fitness classes; recreation, creative, and cultural events; shared meals). Apply the data collected to one or more pilot projects in the state/tribal nation.

### **Selection Criteria**

NCMM will consider the following:

- Narrative of need to address social isolation among older adults
- Commitment to state-wide collaboration and integration