



**Regional  
Transportation  
Authority**

## **For immediate release**

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### **THE RTA INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR OPERATING AND CAPITAL PROJECTS**

*Federal dollars to help improve mobility and access for the region's older adults,  
persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals*

Chicago – The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has launched a call for projects that will help improve mobility and ensure the provision of efficient transportation services in a seven-county region. The grant program will provide \$5.6 million through the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and the New Freedom programs. Funds will be awarded to initiatives that propose ideas to improve service coordination and efficiency in the region while avoiding service redundancies and that link workers with job opportunities. The RTA administers both grant programs as the designated recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds.

The search for innovative projects follows the RTA's completion of the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan developed in conjunction with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). That planning initiative, adopted by the RTA Board last October, identifies and recommends regional and local strategies that encourage the most effective use of available community transportation services to enhance mobility for the region's older adults, persons with disabilities and persons with low incomes.

“Given transit's current financial state, we need to think creatively on how we can better coordinate our transit services for the region to maximize the use of every resource and every dollar,” said Executive Director Steve Schlickman. “These programs advance our efforts to become more efficient and give people more convenient and affordable transportation options while helping to relieve congestion on our region's highways.”

Metra's successful Sunrise Service on the Union Pacific North line was established last year using a grant from the Job Access Reverse Commute program. That project added an additional early morning reverse commute Metra train from Chicago to Waukegan to meet early work start times of north suburban employers. The added train also benefits employees who reside farther north along the line who now have a viable suburb-to-suburb travel option to the same suburban business centers. An added benefit from the new service was gained because the earlier outbound train necessitated an earlier pre-dawn inbound train which serves the traditional commute market.

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Another grant recipient from last year that received funding from both programs was the Ride-In-Kane project. Its goal is to coordinate fragmented services into a combined system and optimize resources to expand service into areas currently not served or underserved. The new and expanded service will begin in January, 2008 and increase the mobility of older adults and persons with disabilities.

New project applications from Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties will be accepted through March 20. They will then be screened through the selection process and criteria that were developed in accordance with the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan. Any operating projects proposed will require a 50 percent local match and any capital projects will require a 20 percent local match. A recommended list of projects will be considered at the June 19, 2008, RTA Board meeting.

For more information on the Job Access Reverse Commute and New Freedom programs, attend the open house on Wednesday, January 30, 2008 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the RTA, 175 West Jackson Boulevard – Suite 1550 in Chicago. You can also obtain more information and download an application at [jarcnf.rtachicago.com](http://jarcnf.rtachicago.com).

All applications are due by 4 p.m. on March 20, 2008.

### **ABOUT THE PROGRAMS**

**The Job Access Reverse Commute Program:** Job Access Reverse Commute grants are used to improve access to transportation services to employment and related activities for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals. Grants are also available for transporting residents from urban areas to suburban employment opportunities.

**New Freedom Program:** New Freedom grants are used to provide new public transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that assist individuals with disabilities, including to and from jobs and employment support services.

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*About the RTA: The RTA provides financial oversight, funding and regional planning for the three public transit operations in Northeastern Illinois: The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus and train, Metra commuter rail and Pace suburban bus and paratransit. For more information, visit [www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com) and [www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org](http://www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org).*