Transit COVID-19 Response Program
Information Collection Webinar
March 25, 2021

<u>Candace Key:</u>
Good afternoon. My name is Candace Key and I am the Director of the Office of System Safety in the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, or TSO. Today, you will hear from two of my TSO colleagues, Paulina Orchard, Division Chief for Safety, Policy and Promotion, and Sharece Tyer, Senior Program Analyst, who will provide a brief overview of the new Transit COVID-19 Response Program information collection.

Before we begin, I would like to encourage you to submit your questions to us through the Q&A pod. We will answer your questions at the end of the presentation.

A recording of this presentation and transcript will be made available on FTA's website after this presentation. The presentation slides and demonstration video are currently available on the website for download.

Paulina, I will now turn it over to you.

<u>Paulina Orchard:</u>
Thank you, Candace. By now, we hope you all have had a chance to review FTA's Federal Register Notice 2021-002 on the new mandatory reporting requirement for the Transit COVID-19 Response Program. FTA will collect data from FTA recipients and subrecipients on the impacts of COVID-19. FTA will use the information submitted through the application to inform its actions in support of the transit industry's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts and implementation of the Federal mass requirement for public transportation.

FTA will require this information from recipients and subrecipients of FTA funds under the Urbanized Area Formula Funding Program Section 5307, or the Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program Section 5311 that operate transit systems or pass-through funds to subrecipients that operate transit systems. The focus of today's webinar is recipients of Section 5311 funds that will report on behalf of their applicable subrecipients. Transit agencies that provide service and submit reports to the National Transit Database, or NTD, as urban reporters for tribal transit reporters will also submit information to the online application.

The webinar recording, presentation slides, and demonstration video for this respondent category are available for download on FTA's Transit COVID-19 Response Program Information Collection web page.

FTA may initiate voluntary reporting for recipients of Section 5310 funding in the future. However, the online application is not prepared to accept voluntary Section 5310 submissions at this time.

Respondents will use the transit COVID-19 Response Program information collection online application to report. The online application will show up as a new module in respondents'

Transit Integrated Appian Development Platform account using the same login information used to access the National Transit Database.

Respondents will fill out two forms for each subrecipient when they first access the application, the Baseline Form and a Recurring Form. The Baseline Form collects information on service reductions and suspensions between March 13 2020, the start of the COVID-19 public health emergency, and February 282021. Reporters will fill this form out one time for each subrecipient.

The Recurring Form collects cumulative data on worker counts, operational status, and COVID-19 information. Reporters will fill out this form monthly for each subrecipient. FTA will provide an Excel file of the questions for States to share with subrecipients as they gather information to report. We will announce the availability of this resource soon.

The Baseline Form collects responses to two questions. First, "did the subrecipient at any time between March 13 2020 and February 28, 2021, reduce service in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency?" This is a "yes" or "no" question. It includes any service reduction, regardless of the length of time. For example, if a subrecipient provided reduced service in the first month of the public health emergency and has since returned to "Normal Operations," you would still answer "yes" to this question.

The second question is, "did the subrecipient at any time between March 13, 2020 and February 28, 2021 suspend service in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency?" This is also a "yes" or "no" question. It includes any service suspension regardless of the length of time. Each respondent will fill this form out once for each subrecipient by no later than April 16, 2021.

Next, Sharece will provide an overview of the requested cumulative data, reporting frequency, and available support for respondents. Before Sharece begins, I would like to remind you to submit your questions to us in the Q&A pod on your screen. We will answer questions at the end of the presentation.

Sharece Tyer:
Thank you, Paulina. The Recurring Form collects Transit Workforce data, information on Service Impacts, and COVID-19 Data. We will go into each of these categories in greater detail in a few moments.

For example, if you have three subrecipients, you will fill out three Recurring Forms each month or one per subrecipient. You can find reporting instructions and definitions in the User Guide located both inside the online application and on FTA's website. The Recurring Form collects the number of transit operators, the number of other front-line essential workers, and the number of all other workers at the agency.

The Recurring Form also asks whether an agency's operations are reduced or suspended entirely. Finally, the Recurring Form collects information directly related to COVID-19. It collects cumulative counts of transit worker positives, fatalities, recoveries, and unvaccinated employees. The form also collects "yes" or "no" responses on whether the agency requires workers to be

vaccinated and whether the agency has implemented the Federal mask requirement for public transportation.

The categorization of transit workforce personnel in this section of the Recurring Form differs from employee information that full NTD reporters may provide annually to FTA. This categorization focuses on grouping full and part-time employees and contractors into three categories: transit operators, other frontline personnel, and other workers.

So, let's review each of the data points individually. The Transit Workforce section of the form collects the total number of transit operators at the end of the reporting period. This includes all full and part-time employees and contractors, including those furloughed. It includes personnel other than security agents scheduled to be on board vehicles and revenue operations such as vehicle operators, conductors, and ticket collectors. It also includes transit agency attendants on board to assist riders in boarding and alighting, securing wheelchairs, et cetera. Any employees or contractors who work as transit operators and also perform other jobs within the agency, such as working dispatch, et cetera, should be counted as transit operators for the purpose of this report.

This field collects the total number of other front-line essential workers at the end of the reporting period. This includes all full and part-time employees and contractors, including those furloughed. These are individuals whose work-related duties must be performed on-site and involve being in close proximity or less than six feet from the public or other workers. This excludes individuals who serve as operators that we discussed previously. Those individuals should be counted as operators only.

The last field in the Transit Workforce section of the form collects the total number of other workers at the end of the reporting period. This includes all full and part-time employees and contractors who are not otherwise counted as transit operators or as other front-line essential workers, including those furloughed.

Under Service Impacts, select from "Suspended," "Reduced," or "Normal Operations" in the drop-down menu. Select "Suspended" if the subrecipient suspended transit service entirely due to the COVID-19 public health emergency at the end of the reporting period. Select "Reduced" if the subrecipient reduced the level of transit service from its normal level due to the COVID-19 public health emergency at the end of the reporting period. Select "Normal" if the subrecipient is currently operating normal levels of service.

The COVID-19 Data section starts by collecting the cumulative total number of workers that have tested positive for COVID-19 at the recipient agency. This includes full and part-time employees and contractors. This total is cumulative from the beginning of the COVID-19 public health emergency, March 13 2020, through to the end of the reporting period. For example, an April 16,2021 Recurring Form submission, which collects data through the end of March, should provide the number of workers who tested positive for COVID-19 from March 132020 through March 31 2021.

This field collects the cumulative total number of workers at the subrecipient agency that has died from complications related to COVID-19. This includes full and part-time employees and contractors. This total is cumulative from the beginning of the COVID-19 public health emergency, March 132020, through to the end of the reporting period. This number cannot exceed the number of COVID-19 worker positives.

This field collects the cumulative number of workers that have recovered from COVID-19 at the subrecipient agency. This includes full and part-time employees and contractors that have returned to work following an absence due to a positive COVID-19 test. Please note that this number also includes workers who were kept home due to exposure or a potential exposure. This total is cumulative from the beginning of the COVID-19 public health emergency, March 13, 2020, through to the end of the reporting period.

This question asks if the subrecipient currently requires COVID-19 vaccinations or plans to require COVID-19 vaccinations for some or all of their workers. This is a "yes" or "no" field. This field collects the total number of workers at the subrecipient agency, including full and part-time employees and contractors, that have not received a COVID-19 vaccination. This number cannot exceed the total number of workers reported earlier in the form. Please note your agency should submit this data to the extent that you are able to compile such information consistent with applicable privacy laws. This field can be left blank.

This section of the form asks whether the subrecipient implemented the recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Order and Transportation Security Administration Security Directive, which requires workers and passengers to wear masks on public transportation.

Respondents must fill out the Baseline Form and March 2021 Recurring Form for each subrecipient by April 16 2021. After the initial report, recurring reports are due on the 15th of the following month. When the 15th falls on a weekend, the report is due on the next business day. For example, the April 2021 Recurring Form will be due on May 17 2021. Respondents will continue filling out the monthly recurring reports until December 31 2021, or until the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency, whichever comes first.

FTA built in a number of features to make reporting easier. First, the data collected in the Recurring Form is cumulative and subsequent Recurring Forms are pre-populated with the values from the previous month. For example, the form for April 2021 will be pre-populated with the data provided in the March 2021 or initial recurring report. Additionally, if a subrecipient's numbers have not changed, you do not have to do any data entry. You can just click to submit the report. The form itself is built with a few simple validation checks for typos and other errors, and also the application sends out automated notifications and reminders. You can access definitions with the click of a button while inside the application. And the User Guide, which includes definitions, is available within the application and on the Transit COVID-19 Response Program Information Collection website.

So next, let's watch a short video that demonstrates how to navigate the online application.

(VIDEO STARTS)

<u>Video Speaker:</u>
Reporting starts by entering the Transit Integrated Appian Development Platform, using the same username and password you already use to access the National Transit Database. Once the COVID-19 Response Program Information Collection module is live, you will find links to both the NTD and the COVID-19 form on your main page. Clicking on the COVID-19 form opens the overview page. From here, you can access the Baseline Form and Recurring Form for each of your applicable subrecipients. We can tell that we need to fill out the baseline and the Recurring Forms for the fictional subrecipient county transit services because of the orange outstanding submission boxes.

Clicking on the name of the transit agency takes us to the forms for county transit services. The yellow exclamation point tells us that we have not filled out the baseline or the Recurring Forms.

Let's take a look at the Baseline Form. Remember, you will fill this form out only once per subrecipient, make the appropriate selections and click submit. The green checkmark confirms that we submitted the Baseline Form.

Let's take a look at the Recurring Form. Clicking on the link takes us to the Recurring Form. The Recurring Form collects information on three main topics: Transit Workforce, Service Impacts, and COVID-19 Data.

Note the blue question marks to the right of each line. Click on any one of those question marks to access a brief description of the field and relevant definitions. As you enter numbers into the Transit Workforce section, the system automatically calculates your total workforce. Remember that the numbers in this form are cumulative. When you access next month's Recurring Form, the system will automatically carry over these numbers, making it easy to update any that have changed.

Once we click, "submit and close," we will see our reporting status change to up to date, and a green checkmark will appear next to our Recurring Form. We are now done with reporting for county transit services for the month.

Click back to return to the main page. Follow the same steps to fill out the baseline and Recurring Forms for each of your staff recipients.

(VIDEO ENDS)

<u>Sharece Tyer:</u>
FTA developed a Transit COVID-19 Response Program Information Collection website where respondents can access more information about the information collection and the online application, including factsheets, the User Guide, links to the industry webinars, webinar materials, and demonstration videos. As Candace mentioned at the beginning of this presentation, we've posted a copy of this presentation and demonstration video to the website. The presentation, recording, and transcript will be posted soon. We also encourage you to

contact FTA's Office of Transit Safety and Oversight at FTASystemSafety@dot.gov for further assistance.

Candace Key:

I want to thank everyone for your participation. Please remember to contact us at FTASystemSafety@dot.gov if you have any questions about this information collection effort. This concludes today's session.

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