



Federal Transit Administration Region IV

November 10, 2009

ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

We have been busy in Region IV with recruitments! In FY 2009, we hired 9 new employees, 5 of which will assist the region with implementing and overseeing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Our new hires include Elizabeth (Parris) Orr, Margarita (Maggie) Sandberg, Andres Ramirez, Holly Peterson, Valencia Williams, Charles Butts, Guanying Lei, Francis Alomia, and Ted Schmidt.

The current geographic assignments for our community planners and program managers in our offices of Planning and Program Development and Oversight and Program Management are outlined in the attached geographic assignment chart. **(Attachment 1)** Also attached is the updated organizational chart and regional contact list. **(Attachments 2 & 3)**

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA)

This important piece of legislation remains a top priority within the department. We were successful in meeting the critical deadlines for Phase I and offer the following reminders and updates regarding Phase II. Region IV obligated 86% of the regional ARRA funds – well above the 50% threshold required to be obligated by September 1, 2009. We awarded 127 ARRA grants totaling \$740.3M. We now need your help to obligate the remaining funds and meet all of the reporting requirements for ARRA.

We are currently in Phase II of ARRA, which requires 100% of the funds to be obligated by March 5, 2010. During Phase II grantees will work with their ARRA FTA Region IV point-of-contact to submit, complete or amend their ARRA application. There are only three types of amendments allowed during ARRA Phase II: 1) adding remaining apportionment, 2) zero dollar, or 3) cost savings. Please click the following link for specific guidance on the ARRA Phase II process. (http://www.fta.dot.gov/regions/region4/regional_offices_9284.html). For the State DOTs, information on the Phase II process is located at http://www.fta.dot.gov/regions/region4/regional_offices_8009.html)

ARRA Contacts – Phase II

Grant Amendment Questions	Robert Buckley Valencia Williams	Robert.buckley@dot.gov 404-865-5618 Valencia.williams@dot.gov 404-865-5634
Amendment Review Requests	Marie Lopez	Marie.lopez@dot.gov 404-865-5616
Budget Revisions	Charles “Chip” Butts, P.E. - NC, AL, GA John “Ted” Schmitt, P.E. - SC, TN, KY, MS Francis Alomia - FL, PR	charles.butts@dot.gov , 404-865-5607 john.t.schmidt@dot.gov , 404-865-5643 francis.alomia@dot.gov , 404-865-5638

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	Maggie Sandberg - FL	Margarita.sandberg@dot.gov 404-865-5612
Reporting (TEAM, 1512, 1201) and Oversight	Andres Ramirez Maggie Sandberg (non-DOT)	Andres.ramirez@dot.gov 404-865-5611 Margarita.sandberg@dot.gov 404-865-5612

Important Dates / Timeline

Per the Federal Register notice, FTA is requiring all applications for the remainder of the apportionments to be submitted to DOL no-later-than **December 30, 2009** to ensure that all funds are obligated by March 5, 2010. **However, we are asking our regional partners to assist us in meeting our Regional goal**, which is to have all the formula ARRA applications submitted in TEAM and sent to DOL no-later-than **Friday, November 13, 2009**. This will help avoid any issues that may arise over the holidays.

ARRA Reporting and Oversight

Thank you for your continued support in meeting all the ARRA reporting requirements. All ARRA reporting information can be found at: http://www.fta.dot.gov/index_9440_10542.html. The next reporting dates are below:

- Jan 1-10: Quarterly FFR/MPR's in TEAM
- Jan 1-10: 1512 Reports at www.federalreporting.gov
- Feb 17: 1201c in TEAM

Additional 1512 information, including frequently asked questions and common errors can be found on the Region IV ARRA website at: http://www.fta.dot.gov/regions/region4/regional_offices_9284.html.

ARRA Fraud Awareness Training

The Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General (OIG), has conducted numerous training throughout Region IV. Over the next couple of months, the OIG will have additional training opportunities in South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and the Virgin Islands. We encourage anyone at your agency involved in ARRA to attend. After this phase of training is complete, the OIG will visit agencies and review contracts and other documentation. Also, the General Accounting Office (GAO) has already started visiting agencies. Finally, FTA contractors are also performing ARRA oversight reviews at selected agencies which are not having triennial reviews.

ARRA Oversight Team

The ARRA Oversight team within the Operations and Program Management Division in Region IV, is lead by Margarita Sandberg. The team is responsible for the oversight of all ARRA projects (except DOT) as well as all ARRA reporting requirements. The team consists of the following engineers:

Mr. Charles "Chip" Butts, P.E. – NC, AL, GA
Mr. John "Ted" Schmitt, P.E. --- SC, TN, KY, MS,
Ms. Francis Alomia –FL, PR,

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS AND SAFETEA-LU

The 30-day SAFETEA-LU extension expired on October 31, 2009. On Thursday, October 29, 2009, Congress passed another 45-day extension which expires on December 18, 2009. No new FY 2010 program funds have been made available under the Continuing Resolution. New program funding will be made available once the FY 2010 Appropriations are enacted. **In the meantime, carryover balances from FY 2008 and FY 2009 are available in TEAM.**

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND GRANT MAKING IN FY 2010

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In FY 2009, Region IV awarded 488 grants to our grantees totaling \$1.58B. Thanks to ARRA, this is the highest amount of funding we have ever obligated. To better prepare for the FY 2010 grant workload, we offer the following reminders.

TEAM

TEAM is now open for fiscal year 2010 business. FY 2009 and prior year carryover funds under the Formula and Discretionary accounts for all formula programs, including Urbanized Area, Other than urbanized area, Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities, Job Access and Reverse Commute, New Freedom, Fixed Guideway Modernization, and Metropolitan and Statewide Planning are available. Additionally, carryover for Bus and Bus Related Facilities and New Starts/Small Starts Capital Investment Grants for FY 2008 through FY 2009 are available and FY 2009 funds for the ARRA. No new FY 2010 funds have been made available under the Continuing Resolution. New funding will be made available once the FY 2010 Appropriations are enacted.

FY 2010 Certifications and Assurances

The FY 2010 Certifications and Assurances published in the Federal Register, October 19, 2009 are available and loaded in TEAM. In order to process any grants this FY (including ARRA Amendments) please read and check off all the applicable sections, and have the designated individuals sign / pin the "FY 2010 Certs & Assurances." The Certifications and Assurances can be viewed at <http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/16-Master.pdf>.

FY 2010 Grant Making

The regional deadline for submitting complete grant applications is **June 30, 2010** for all program funds requiring Department of Labor (DOL) Certification. In order for a grant to be considered complete and for FTA to assign a grant number, enabling submission in TEAM, all program and project related requirements must have been met. Complete applications should have also undergone the regional review period and received all requisite approvals. Determinations to review and process grant applications received after June 30, 2010 will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Important dates for FY2010 grant making are shown below. We ask that you plan accordingly to have pre-requisites and submissions to FTA no later than the dates below.

November 30, 2009	FY 2010 Lapsing Funds response due to FTA; email stating if you intend to apply or let funds lapse, as applicable.
May 31, 2010	Final date by which all grant requirements should be met (e.g. cross-cutting requirements such as TIP/STIP, NEPA approvals, local match, and program specific requirements, such as JARC/New Freedom). Draft grant reviews should be requested no later than this date in order to meet the June 30 th date.
June 30, 2010	Date by which all COMPLETE applications* should be submitted in TEAM and transmitted to DOL; this is critical for all grants that your agency needs obligated by September 24, 2010. Grant submissions after this date will be handled on a case-by-case basis and may not make it through the grant review process in sufficient time to obligate during the FY.
July – August 2010	Following DOL certification, which can take 30-60 days, all discretionary grants will be sent for release.
September 24, 2010	Projected date for TEAM closure. Date by which all grants must be obligated in TEAM, particularly any containing lapsing funds.

*NOTE: A [Complete application](#) (see page 77367, #3) is one which the grantee has met the applicable grant requirements and the grant has received all relevant regional approvals, enabling a final grant number to be assigned, and the grant to be officially submitted in the TEAM-web system.

Lapsing Funds

Lapsing funds notifications were emailed this year during the first week of November by Marie Lopez. As a reminder, any funds identified with an FY 2010 lapse date must be awarded in an FTA grant **by September 24, 2010** or they will lapse and the funds will be returned to the U.S. Treasury. It is essential that you begin to plan for the use of these funds and contact FTA Region IV with your plans

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and timeline for these projects. Please respond by email to Marie Lopez (marie.lopez@dot.gov) stating if you intend to apply or let the funds lapse NLT than **November 30, 2009**.

Civil Rights - DBE, EEO, Title VI, ADA

Please be sure to check with Frank Billue, Region IV Civil Right Officer, to ensure that an annual Civil Rights Program (CR) Update has or will occur as soon as possible. Frank can be contacted at (404) 865-5628 or frank.billue@dot.gov. Your local Civil Rights Officer can review the status of CR Programs in TEAM, but cannot make any changes. Programs that need review include Title VI and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). These Programs are updated every thirty six months. The only exception is the Title VI Program for MPO's; this Program is updated every four years. Thanks for the timely submission of your Fiscal Year, (FY) 2009/2010 DBE Goals. Aside from your timely submission, you are probably awaiting the final review of the goals, and receipt of the acceptance or rejection letters. It is our intent to mail the letters out on or before November 30, 2009. Concurrently, our plan is to update the TEAM System with your DBE Goals. Remember also that your Semi-annual DBE Awards and Commitment report is due on or before December 1, 2009. The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is another very important requirement that cannot be overlooked, but must be given succinct attention. Please ensure that strict ADA adherence to all regulatory laws is maintained; and compliance and service requirements are always met and maintained and sustained. Finally, please be reminded, that the Business of Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity is not just the responsibility of the Civil Rights Officer; rather it should be an organizational- wide goal and objective to ensure continual Oversight and Compliance. Civil Rights Personnel, please watch your calendars, and the National Transit Institute web-Site for upcoming training. Again, thanks for your continued cooperation and assistance. Additional Civil Rights information can be found at: http://www.fta.dot.gov/civil_rights.html.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

As part of the federal grant application process, public transportation agencies must work with FTA to consider the social, economic, and environmental consequences and benefits of proposed projects and activities. The environmental review process required by the NEPA and related laws includes environmental impact analyses and the preparation of documentation for public review.

Please review the FTA Environmental Analysis and Review website located at http://www.fta.dot.gov/planning/planning_environment_5222.html. This website provides all the necessary information to guide transit agencies, resource agencies, and the public through the environmental review process for transit projects and improvements that receive Federal funds.

In addition, it is imperative that you contact your community planner to discuss any proposed projects and determine, cooperatively, the appropriate environmental action. We encourage grantees to use the beginning of the fiscal year to prepare the requisite environmental documentation for FTA review. The environmental documentation must be reviewed and approved by FTA in advance of seeking Federal funds for real property or any construction related activities. **Please allow 30 days for FTA review and comment of documented categorical exclusions, EAs, and EISs.** Be sure to allocate the appropriate timeframes for public comment and, if applicable, public hearings in your project schedules.

Department of Labor (DOL) Certifications

DOL processes the employee protection certifications required under section 5333(b) in accordance with procedural Guidelines published at [29 C.F.R. 215.3](#) (July 28, 1999 Federal Register). The majority of the FTA grants must be submitted to DOL for certification. The exceptions include any planning grant, the Section 5310, 5311, and 5317 grants. When planning for your grants, please keep in mind that the DOL certification process can take a minimum of 30 days and must occur before the grant is obligated and awarded. Your community planner will submit your grant to DOL once you submit it in TEAM.

To better assist our partners at DOL, be sure to 1) identify all the labor organizations that represent transit employees of the recipient and each subrecipient, and 2) identify any *other transportation*

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providers which operate in the service area of the recipient and the subrecipients and all labor organizations that represent employees of these other transportation providers. Because employee protections are not limited to the employees of the grant recipient, other service area providers must be identified.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT

FTA Region IV conducted 44 Triennial Reviews and 4 State Management Reviews in FY 2009 and with your help we closed 265 grants. We performed 13 Financial Oversight reviews and four Procurement System Reviews. Our regional engineers and transportation specialists continued to provide technical assistance to our grantees and helped resolve a number of your important issues.

For FY 2010, Region IV will conduct 45 Triennial Reviews and 4 State Management Reviews. We will also perform four follow up Procurement Reviews and several follow up Financial Management Oversight reviews. If you are scheduled for a review, our office will be contacting you soon. Beginning this fiscal year, the Program Management staff will focus on reviewing the Federal Financial Reports (FFR) and Milestone Progress Reports. The objective of this initiative will be to work with you to ensure that your reports are accurate and that they provide the required detailed assessment of the progress of your projects including details on any delays you may be experiencing.

We will continue to provide a number of training opportunities in Atlanta including TEAM training, a State Management Review Workshop on January 19-20, and a Triennial Review Workshop on January 21-22. We are in the process of scheduling a second Triennial Review Workshop in Puerto Rico between Feb-Mar 2010. This information for all of the upcoming workshops will be posted to the Region IV website at http://www.fta.dot.gov/regions/region4/regional_offices_8042.html. In addition, invitations will be emailed later this month.

Reminder – TEAM Reports – Federal Financial Reports (FFR) & Milestone Progress Reports (MPRs)

This is a reminder that all Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facility grants reports are due quarterly, regardless of population size. The requirement for these reports, including the specific information which must be contained within these reports is described in Chapter III of the FTA Circular 5010.1D.

PROGRAM UPDATES AND CURRENT INITIATIVES

Circulars

The proposed FTA Circular C 9030.1D Capital Facilities and Formula Grant Programs is out for public comment. The Urbanized Area Formula Program provides grants for capital, planning, and some operating projects in urbanized areas. Comments must be submitted by November 30, 2009. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and follow the online instructions for submitting comments on the U.S. Government electronic docket site (docket number [FTA-2009-0010]).

Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities

On June 16, 2009, the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT) joined with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help improve access to affordable housing, more transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment in communities nationwide. Through a set of guiding livability principles and a partnership agreement that will guide the agencies' efforts, this partnership will coordinate federal housing, transportation, and other infrastructure investments to protect the environment, promote equitable development, and help to address the challenges of climate change.

In Region 4, we promptly seized on the Department-level effort and began to work on ways that we can make contributions to one of the highest priority objectives of the Department of Transportation. We contacted our counterparts in both HUD and the EPA and took a leadership role by creating a Sustainable Communities Regional-level Working Group (SCRWG). However, we went one step further by taking advantage of the location of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a

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component of the Department of the Department of Health and Human Services that is located in Atlanta. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the United States government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. HHS, like FTA and EPA, is very much interested in promoting the health benefits of improved air quality and increased physical activity (exercise). The role of the HHS is in concert with the objectives of the Interagency Partnership and its membership will benefit and enhance the success of the SCRWG..

During the first and second monthly meetings of the SCRWG, we established an objective for the SCRWG Team to develop a comprehensive set of criteria, derived from the individual criteria that each agency uses, to prioritize and focus its resources on those projects that most demonstrate that agency's goals and objectives. Although the SCRWG is still in its infancy, it is making steady progress towards accomplishing its goals and objectives. **Stay tuned to learn more about how the SCRWG will guide the efforts of these agencies during fiscal year 2010.**

Transit Green Building Action Plan

FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff forwarded the Congressional requested, **Transit Green Building Action Plan** to the House and Senate Appropriations Committee leaders on July 10, 2009. The Plan presented an overview of certified green building transit projects; an analysis of green building rating systems suitable for transit projects; an inventory of relevant assistance that could be provided to transit agencies, and planned FTA actions, timelines and resources to encourage green building in FTA programs. The plan is available at www.fta.dot.gov/publications/publications_10318.html - 35k - 2009-10-08 - [Cached](#) .

United We Ride

Region IV continues to work with United We Ride (UWR) Ambassador Jo Ann Hutchinson from the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination, Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA). If you aren't on Jo Ann's mailing list and haven't seen her blog, be sure to drop her a line – she has a wealth of information to assist you with your coordinated transportation efforts. Jo Ann can be reached at hutchinson@ctaa.org or at 800.891.0590, Extension 730. In addition, Region IV conducts UWR Quarterly Calls with Jo Ann. Dates and the call in number for the FY 2010 Region IV United We Ride call are below:

Tuesday, December 15, 10AM EST
Tuesday, March 16, 10AM EST
Tuesday, June 15, 10AM EST
Tuesday, September 14, 10AM EST
Call in Number: 877.241.4293, Pass Code: 18833239#

Very Small (VSS), Small (SS), and New Starts (NS) (Section 5309)

Thinking about a VSS, SS, or NS? If you are initiating or intend to initiate an [Alternatives Analysis \(AA\)](#) that may result in the selection of a transit fixed guideway project proposed for funding under the Section 5309 New Starts program, you must notify the regional office in writing of such studies. Prior to formally initiating the study (or as soon as possible for studies that have already been initiated), FTA requests the opportunity to review the following information: Description of Study Area, Transportation Problems, and Needs; Study Goals, Objectives, and Preliminary Evaluation Measures; and the Description of Conceptual Alternatives.

ARRA Discretionary Funds

TIGGER: Projects have been announced for the \$100M FTA Program for Transit Investments for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction (TIGGER). Announcements were made Monday, September 21, 2009 and congratulations go out to the following projects which were awarded from Region IV:

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Alabama: Montgomery Area Transit System (Montgomery), \$2,675,000. Purchase of Five Hybrid Electric Buses: City of Montgomery-MATS proposes to purchase 30-35 foot low floor hybrid-electric buses in order to replace existing transit system buses.

Florida: Palm Tran (West Palm Beach), \$320,000. Diesel Bus Efficiency Improvements with Thermal Motor Fans: Purchase and install Thermal Motor Fans for diesel buses to improve bus efficiency and lower fuel costs.

Florida: Broward County Transit, \$2,000,000. Diesel Bus Efficiency Improvements bus cooling System retrofits: Replace the mechanically/hydraulically driven cooling system on buses with electrically powered devices in order to achieve fuel savings and reductions in energy and greenhouse gas emissions. BCT will purchase and install MiniHybrid Thermal Systems ("MH8") from EMP Advanced Development LLC (EMP) which will increase fuel efficiency by 5 percent.

Georgia: Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, \$10,800,000. Laredo Bus Facility Solar Canopies: Provide shade structures with integrated, grid tied photovoltaic cells to be erected on the bus storage lot at the Laredo Bus Maintenance Facility. PV canopies will produce power and reduce temperatures underneath canopies. MARTA anticipates that the power produced by these photovoltaic panels will be sold to Georgia Power under their Distributed Generation Contract Program. This is the largest photovoltaic installation in Georgia.

North Carolina: City of Charlotte/Charlotte Area Transit System (Charlotte), \$3,000,000. Hybrid Buses: Upgrade a planned order of buses from diesel to hybrid technology. CATS' fleet and financial plans call for the replacement 1998, 1999 and 2007 year diesel buses with new diesel buses in fiscal year 2012. This project will upgrade the replacement buses to hybrid technology.

Tennessee: Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (Chattanooga), \$650,000. Lighting Upgrades for Facilities: Purchase and installation of approximately 1,724 existing fluorescent lights with LED lighting in seven areas of operation. This project would encompass CARTA's parking garage facilities, bus barn and shop, service lane, steam room, and maintenance shop.

Each of these agencies has been contacted by Region IV to begin the application process. For State DOTs, you should be aware that all these projects should be in the STIP and all funds obligated by March 31, 2010. Please work with your local MPOs to ensure these projects are amending into the STIP as funding with ARRA TIGGER funds.

TIGER: Projects for the \$1.5B USDOT TIGER Program were due September, 15 2009. Eligible projects must be of regional or national significance and include highway, bridge, transit, passenger and freight rail and port infrastructure projects. Approximately 1400 projects were submitted totaling \$57B; over half of the requests were for highway projects. Applications are currently under review by multimodal teams. Announcements are expected in mid-January 2010.

TRIBAL: ARRA set aside 2.5 percent of the funds appropriated for the Section 5311 program to be distributed to Indian Tribes under the provisions of FTA's Tribal Transit Program. Tribes responded by submitting over 70 applications with a total value of \$ 55 million by the May 22, 2009, deadline. FTA will coordinate its review of tribal applications under the ARRA program and the annual program, which were due June 29, 2009, to maximize the opportunities for Tribes and avoid redundant funding. Selections under both programs are expected to be announced before the end of the year.

REGION IV WEBSITE

Please add the Region IV Website to your favorites and keep checking back for updates. The Region IV website can be found at: http://www.fta.dot.gov/regions/regional_offices_871.html. The website contains the latest organizational chart, geographic assignments, ARRA and FY 2010 grant processing information, a grantee resource center and upcoming events in Region IV!