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REGION 10 BULLETIN NO: 2011-51

Subject: Nearly \$35 Million to Improve Transportation Choices and Job Access for Military Families

Program Area: Capital Grants

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U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today announced \$34.6 million for 55 projects in 32 states and Guam to enhance access to local, affordable transportation services for military families and spouses, and wounded warriors.

Today's announcement complements the Obama Administration's Joining Forces initiative led by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden. This comprehensive, national effort is mobilizing all sectors of society to give our service members and their families' employment opportunities and support.

"The Obama Administration is committed to providing our military veterans and their families with the resources they need and deserve," Secretary LaHood said. "These projects will better connect them with a range of reliable, affordable transportation options so they can get to work as well as the supermarket, their kid's day care center, medical facilities, and other destinations."

Many military families live in suburban and rural communities where filling the gas tank for long commutes is expensive and public transportation is limited. Projects funded by the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative will bridge the gap by enabling states and communities to build or expand so-called "one-click, one-call" centers that offer comprehensive information on local transportation options, and other community services, with just a single phone call or click of the mouse. Typically, such information is not available in one convenient place, and better local coordination will result in better services for veterans and nonveterans alike.

"Military families and veterans must be able to take full advantage of the transportation resources in their communities," said Peter Rogoff, Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which manages the grants through its discretionary Bus and Bus Facilities Program. "Every service member who returns home or a spouse who relocates to a new community deserves the best possible chance to earn a reliable paycheck and that means having access to reliable transportation choices."

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The grant selection process was highly competitive, and FTA reviewed 70 eligible proposals representing \$52 million in funding requests. Examples of key projects receiving federal funds include:

- \$2 million to the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority in central Massachusetts to expand an existing one-call center by adding agencies serving local veterans. The center will offer an array of traveler and community services and act as a one-stop shop to military families and spouses who need them.
- \$2 million to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to work with the state's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to create a network of four regional one-call centers and websites that bring individual transportation providers together into a regionally coordinated system to meet the needs of area military families, veterans, and others.
- \$1.9 million to the Jacksonville Transportation Authority to implement a one-call/one-click transportation resource center. The project will expand access to the regional scheduling system via internet and phone and give veterans access to a multitude of regional transportation, including public transit, vanpools and private transportation companies.
- \$614,000 to the Colorado Department of Transportation to create an information and assistance center and a coordinated scheduling center for the Denver region, which is home to nearly 200,000 veterans. Veterans are closely involved in the planning process.
- \$608,000 to the Indian Nations Council of Governments in the Tulsa, Oklahoma region to create a coordinated one-call transportation center covering 26 counties, including Muskogee, where a Veteran's Administration (VA) Medical Center veterans' transportation service pilot project is under way. The center will use technology to connect numerous rural transit and veteran transportation providers as a way to assess and address ongoing transportation needs.

A complete list of funded projects is available at <http://fta.dot.gov/grants/13094.html>.

The Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative is led by the federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, a permanent partnership of federal departments working together to better coordinate federal programs on behalf of people with disabilities, the elderly and low-income individuals. The Council is chaired by Secretary LaHood.

In addition to US Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Department of Veterans Affairs is contributing up to \$3 million for the VA health care network to coordinate veterans' transportation needs with community transportation systems. The Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy is contributing \$250,000 for social media tools and training to include veterans and the military in community transportation decision-making. The Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense are also lending critical support, in part through their extensive networks of community-based advocates. Additional in-kind

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support is provided by over a dozen national veteran service organizations.

Today's announcement supports President Obama's Veterans Employment Initiative, an ongoing effort to win major private sector commitments to veteran and military spouse employment. To date, 96 companies have formed a public-private partnership with the Department of Defense to hire military spouses. And more than 25 individual companies have stepped up and committed to veteran hiring or training targets, including, most recently, the American Logistics Association and its affiliates, which pledge to hire 25,000 veterans and spouses by the end of 2013. For more information visit: www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces.

Additional information on the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative is available at http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13094_13528.html.

For further information, contact Region 10's Linda Gehrke at 206-220-4463 or email linda.gehrke@dot.gov.

Sincerely,



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Regional Administrator