



**Request for Proposals:  
Research Paper on the Role of  
Transportation in Addressing Social  
Isolation in Older Adults**

Issue Date: January 27, 2020

Submission Date: February 17, 2020

Work completion date: May 31, 2020

## **Request for Proposals:**

### **Research Paper on the Role of Transportation in Addressing Social Isolation in Older Adults**

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) is soliciting proposals, on behalf of the National Center for Mobility Management, for a consultant to complete a research paper on the role of transportation in addressing social isolation in older adults through the following question:

**How can public transportation be used as a preventive intervention tool to address the potentially harmful effects of social isolation?**

All work on this research paper must be completed by May 31, 2020.

## **Background**

The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM; [nc4mm.org](http://nc4mm.org)) is a virtual technical assistance center, funded by the Federal Transit Administration, that supports mobility management professionals across the country. The center is led by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and operated with partners American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and Easterseals Inc.

Its activities focus on helping communities improve transportation for community residents, particularly those with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited income. NCMM creates and disseminates written and web-based resources; responds to requests for technical assistance; oversees and coaches communities through human-centered design planning and implementation grants; conducts in-person and on-line, self-directed trainings; and organizes and presents at conferences.

## **Framing the Research Topic**

Research has linked social isolation and loneliness with a higher incidence of/risk for developing debilitating physical and mental health conditions.<sup>1</sup> As a corollary, research has shown that activities such as employment or volunteering, food access, personal appointments, and social events can create a sense of purpose, boost an individual's mental outlook and cognitive function, and promote enhanced physical health.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Henning-Smith, C., et al. (2018). "Key Informant Perspectives on Rural Social Isolation and Loneliness." Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center. Retrieved From: [https://rhrc.umn.edu/wp-content/files\\_mf/1539002382UMNpolicybriefKeyInformantPerspectivesonRuralSocialIsolationandLoneliness.pdf](https://rhrc.umn.edu/wp-content/files_mf/1539002382UMNpolicybriefKeyInformantPerspectivesonRuralSocialIsolationandLoneliness.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Novotney, A. (2019). "Social isolation: It could kill you." Washington DC: American Psychological Association. Retrieved from: <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/05/ce-corner-isolation>

CTAA's premise for this research is that a lack of transportation can be correlated with incidences of social isolation; specifically, that a lack of mobility directly affects patterns of social engagement by dictating people's access to resources, amenities, and socializing opportunities. If CTAA's premise is shown to be valid, then it holds that an improvement in older adults' access to transportation services that fit their needs—with regard to affordability, convenience, and safety—will meaningfully increase their access to life-sustaining activities.

Public transportation services, especially in rural areas, may be a literal lifeline for older adults who have no other means of moving about their community.<sup>3</sup> Drivers are trained to provide appropriately supportive service to older adults while transporting them. Having these services allows these individuals not only to age in their preferred location, but also to stay healthy and contribute to their community.

The research CTAA is requesting should address the following research question: **How can public transportation be used as a preventive intervention tool to address the potentially harmful effects of social isolation?**

## Proposals

Proposals should describe the consultant's approach to addressing the research question of "How can public transportation be used as a preventive intervention tool to address the potentially harmful effects of social isolation?" through the tasks listed below.

CTAA's responsibilities during the project will include the provision of

- background information on transportation and facilitate access to field experts and case study subjects, to the extent possible and as needed;
- timely edits and revisions to consultant's drafts; and
- guidance on the final product.

### Task 1: Scoping the Research

---

Under Task 1, the Consultant will conduct a review of relevant background research. The following are topic areas that CTAA intends for the research paper to address. Proposals should indicate which topics the consultant recommends the paper focus on to have the

---

<sup>3</sup> Ettelman, B., et al. (2017). "Identifying Transportation Solutions That Promote Health Aging for Texans." College Station, TX: Texas A&M Transportation Institute. Retrieved From: <https://static.tti.tamu.edu/tti.tamu.edu/documents/PRC-17-83-F.pdf>

most impact; the consultant may choose as many as they would like, or recommend additional questions for inclusion in the research.

- What data related to the research question are available?
- What other associated factors (confounding variables) also contribute to social isolation outside of transportation barriers?
- Any examples of communities that are addressing social isolation through public transportation partnerships or programs? What are the outcomes/lessons learned?
- What are the impacts of transportation access on older adults, the overall community, public transportation providers, public health agencies, state agencies?
- Where are the areas of opportunity for both public transportation and public health sectors for meaningful collaboration and change?

## **Task 2: Completing the Research**

---

Under Task 2, the consultant will complete necessary primary and secondary research to answer the outlined research question and any sub-topics identified during Task 1. Activities under this task will include:

1. Where previous research on a key component of this topic is lacking, consultant will conduct her/his own research to improve understanding of the subject.
2. Consultant will conduct a limited amount of primary research with experts in gerontology and transportation. CTAA will help consultant find such experts.
3. Consultant will use case studies where relevant to complement and illustrate the meaning of the background research.
4. Consultant will formulate recommendations for continued research, and well as practical solutions that may be suggested from the research.

## **Task 3: Writing the Research Paper**

---

Under Task 3, the consultant will produce a short research paper suitable for online publication, including a one-page executive summary that may be used as a free-standing document. Activities under this task will include:

1. Consultant will write a 10–15 page research paper (exclusive of citations and bibliography) written for non-experts working in public transportation, public health, and other allied fields.
2. Consultant will respond to copy and content edits from CTAA staff.
3. Consultant will include citations to all research, and appropriately cite the research throughout the white paper
4. Consultant will synthesize the research paper into a 1-page executive summary

## Publication of the Research Paper

Both the final research paper and executive summary will be published electronically on the NCMM website ([www.nc4mm.org](http://www.nc4mm.org)).

CTAA is open to discussions with the consultant on publication of this article in peer-reviewed journals, with the consultant as the first author and FTA, through NCMM, acknowledged as the funder of the research, although this activity would not be included under this scope of work.

## Proposal Requirements

1. Consultant's proposed approach to conducting the research and developing the work products as set forth in this RFP, including key activities, milestones, and timeline by task. No piece of work under this solicitation is to be subcontracted to any party other than the respondent to this RFP.
2. A statement of consultant's capabilities and previous experience with a similar project, including links to similar papers or presentations.
3. Brief bios, resumes, or CVs for all individuals proposed for this project, including their responsibilities pertaining to the project, a summary of their relevant experience, and contact information.
4. Consultant's proposed price, including itemized costs by task and indications of how that cost was calculated, for the development and publication of the white paper. Note: CTAA's estimated maximum budget for this work is \$50,000.
5. A statement regarding consultant's time and capacity to complete the work by the May 31, 2020 deadline.
6. Three references with contact information.

## Consultant Qualifications

Consultants qualified to submit proposals in response to this solicitation include individuals, partnerships, for-profit or non-profit corporations, units of state or local government, and accredited institutions of higher education. CTAA will not award any contracts under this solicitation to entities that are debarred or suspended from doing business with any entity of the U.S. Government. Contracts awarded under this solicitation will be developed and executed in accordance with CTAA's policies and procedures, and will be in compliance with applicable regulations and policies of the Federal Transit Administration.

## Selection Criteria

CTAA will select a consultant to complete this work through the following criteria:

|                                                      |           |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Consultant's proposed approach                       | 10 points |
| Consultant qualifications;<br>relevance to the topic | 10 points |
| Consultant's timeline                                | 5 points  |
| Consultant's price                                   | 5 points  |
| Consultant's references                              | 5 points  |

## Timeline

|                       |                                  |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| January 27            | RFP published                    |
| February 4, 12pm EST  | Questions due                    |
| February 7            | Answers to questions distributed |
| February 17, 12pm EST | Proposals due                    |
| February 28           | Consultant Selection             |
| May 31                | All Deliverables Completed       |

## Questions

After carefully reviewing this RFP, if you have questions please send them by email to **Alex King**, [king@ctaa.org](mailto:king@ctaa.org) no later than 12:00 p.m., EST, on February 4. CTAA will post any responses it may have to these questions online here: <https://nc4mm.org/grants/social-isolation-rfp/>, and will not respond individually to any questions. Telephone inquiries will not be accepted, and may lead to the rejection of a proposal.

## Submittal Instructions

Please submit a written proposal by email to Alex King, [king@ctaa.org](mailto:king@ctaa.org) no later than 12:00 p.m., EST, on February 17, 2020. Proposals should be sent as a single Word or PDF document no longer than 5 pages single spaced. Resumes, references, and illustrative attachments are to be include in that single document, but will not count toward the page limit. Proposals submitted after this deadline or not adhering to the above submittal instructions will not be considered. CTAA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted in response to this solicitation.