

HIRTA

PUBLIC TRANSIT



Who we are

- In 1981, the Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) was formed under a 28E agreement with the 7 counties in central Iowa.
- Region 11, better known as HIRTA, was established to provide public transit services in the counties of Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Story and Warren.

Facebook: @RideHIRTA

Twitter: @RideHIRTA

YouTube: HIRTA Public Transit

Website: www.RideHIRTA.com



Inclusion Statement

HIRTA is committed to creating a safe and inclusive experience for all passengers. We will promote an environment reflective of our communities. Regardless of ability, background or personal circumstances, we will ensure all riders feel welcome and included with HIRTA. Come be yourself, ride together, and ride HIRTA.





Our Board and Staff

- We make a conscious effort embrace and promote diversity and inclusion throughout our agency – especially when considering service changes and hiring to fill open positions.
- Our office staff and drivers are comprised of diverse individuals.
- HIRTA Board members are elected County Supervisors appointed to our Board. Each year we encourage the County to appoint someone to help us maintain a diverse board.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: What does that mean?

One of my favorite ways describe Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is from Chief Diversity Officer Robert Sellers from the University of Michigan who likens the various aspects to attending a dance:

- **Diversity** is where everyone is invited to the party
- **Equity** means that everyone gets to contribute to the playlist
- **Inclusion** means that everyone has the opportunity to dance



Where to Start

- Know why DEI is important to your agency
- Ensure leadership is on board with the vision
- Examine workplace practices with DEI in mind and make necessary changes
 - Ask employees how they feel, what they want
 - Review policies to ensure they are inclusive and follow your DEI vision
 - Assess marketing/outreach processes and materials
- Provide and encourage training at all levels
- Determine what success looks like at your agency



**There is no
one-size-fits-all
strategy**

Our Website

- Available in over 100 languages
- Documents in Spanish are on our website
 - Through our contract with Language Line, we are able to translate documents in other languages as needed and/or requested
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan
- Public Participation Plan
- Board agendas and minutes
 - Meetings are open to the public in person and virtual



HIRTA's DEI Webpage

- **Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**



Accessibility - Opportunities to participate physically, geographically and linguistically



Transparency - People have sufficient access to HIRTA meetings to voice their opinions



Adaptation - Translate documents, notices, etc to be more inclusive to people in our communities



Training - All HIRTA staff receive training in Title V, ADA, DEI, How to use Language Line, LEP, etc.

- **Breakdown of race of service area**

- Knowing and understanding the breakdown is important to make sure HIRTA operates as a company reflective of our communities.

- **What we ask of others**

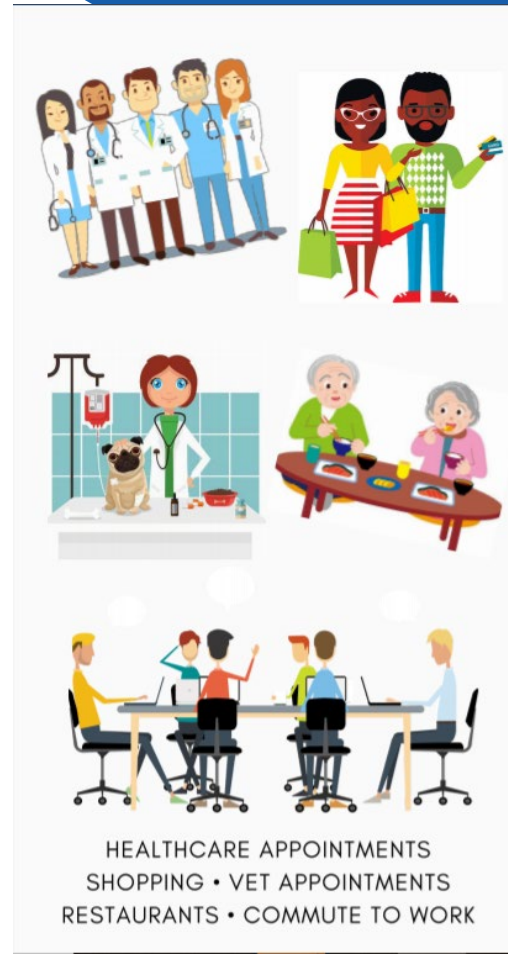
- Tell us what we can do for you to help on future rides
- Understand we'll do our best to make necessary changes or modifications
- Reach out to us if you have any concerns, comments or ideas to make HIRTA more inclusive
- Treat fellow riders and drivers with respect

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan

- The LEP Plan is for those who are not fluent in the English language. Meaning they have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.
- HIRTA is committed to ensuring no person is excluded from participation in or denied transit services on the basis of race, color, or national origin. This plan is used as a guide for HIRTA administration and management of LEP related activities.
- HIRTA's LEP Plan and other documents can be found on our website at www.RideHIRTA.com/Policies

Inclusive Materials

- Safe Space Stickers in our vehicles
- Large print brochure
- Translated materials
- Impaired vision brochure
- Beyond the Bus Symposium: Inclusion Matters (2021)
- And much more! Plus more to come



¿A dónde puede llevarlo HIRTA?



CITAS DE ATENCIÓN MÉDICA
COMPRAS • CITAS CON EL VETERINARIO
RESTAURANTES • VIAJE HASTA EL TRABAJO

¡Y MUCHO MÁS!

Política de No Discriminación


En HIRTA Public Transit estamos comprometidos con asegurar que ninguna persona sea excluida de acceder a sus servicios de tránsito y que no se le nieguen esos servicios por cuestión de su raza, edad, religión, color, sexo o nacionalidad, tal y como se dispone y protege en el Capítulo VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964. Si siente que se violó la política, puede presentar una queja ante la Directora Ejecutiva de HIRTA por teléfono, llamando al 1-877-686-0029 o, por escrito, escribiendo a: 2824 104th St. Urbandale, IA 50322.


Para obtener más información acerca de las obligaciones de HIRTA en virtud del Capítulo VI, visite www.rideharta.com. Los servicios están abiertos al público general, lo que comprende a personas con discapacidades, tal y como requiere la Ley de Personas con Discapacidades de Estados Unidos (ADA, por sus siglas en inglés).


Contáctenos

1-877-686-0029
Llamadas con asistencia de
accesibilidad: llame al 711
erides@rideharta.com
www.rideharta.com

¡Manténgase actualizado!

 HIRTA Public Transit

 @rideHIRTA

 @rideHIRTA

Viaje

HIRTA!

Transporte Público

NOS ENORGULLECEMOS
EN BRINDAR SERVICIOS
EN LOS CONDADOS DE:

BOONE

MARION

DALLAS

STORY

JASPER

WARREN

MADISON



Materials translated to Spanish

[FTA Title VI Program](#)

[HIRTA Brochure](#)

[HIRTA Service Policies](#)

[Limited English Proficiency \(LEP\) Plan](#)

[Public Participation Plan](#)

[Reasonable Modification Complaint](#)

[Reasonable Modification Policy](#)

[Reasonable Modification Request](#)

[Title VI Complaint Form](#)

[Title VI Complaint Process](#)

[Title VI Notification](#)

[Welcome Packet](#)

Impaired Vision Brochure

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY

Some riders have disabilities, including impaired vision. Everyone deserves accessible transportation, and you are providing a great service to our communities.

Learning to help guide riders with a vision impairment may seem daunting. The tips in this brochure will help you develop confidence in better assisting these riders.

Thank you for your kindness and willingness to serve!

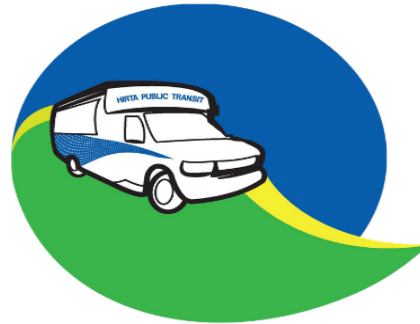


LEARN MORE

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND
WWW.AFB.ORG

FIGHTING BLINDNESS
WWW.FIGHTINGBLINDNESS.IE

VISIONAWARE
WWW.VISIONAWARE.ORG



QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

CONTACT US:
1 (877) 686-0029

ASSISTING RIDERS WITH IMPAIRED VISION



HIRTA

INTRODUCTIONS

OFFERING YOUR ARM TO GUIDE THE RIDER

Touch the back of your hand to the rider's hand.

Here's the back of my hand. Please grip my arm above the elbow.

BASIC NAVIGATION

NARROW SPACES

It's narrow here. Keep holding my arm and walk directly behind me.

TURNING AROUND

We need to turn around. Let's face each other and you grab my other arm.

SWITCHING ARMS

You need to hold my other arm. Reach across my back with your free arm and grip my other arm.

SEATING

ENTERING A CAR

Instruct the rider to place their hand on the roof of the car above the door.

Now you know you're facing the front of the car.. Go ahead and sit down when you're ready, and I'll tell you when I close the door.

ASSISTING WITH SEATING

Place the rider's hand on the back of the chair or bus seat.

Here's your seat. I've placed your hand on the back of the chair.



STEPS & STAIRS

APPROACHING STAIRS

We're approaching steps going up/down. I'll step at the edge of the stairs, then you come level to my side.

GOING UP/DOWN STAIRS

There's a handrail on your right. I'll go first and stay one step ahead. I'll stop when I get to the bottom.

DOORS

APPROACHING DOORS

You should be on the side closest to the doorknob. Switch arms if needed.

There's a door ahead of us. I'll open it.

GOING THROUGH DOORS

Offer door to the rider's free arm.

Please take the door and close it behind you.



Beyond the Bus: Inclusion Matters

- Transportation plays a role in inclusion by giving everyone equal access to the same opportunities of those who do not use public transit.
- This event focused on inclusion and the role public transit plays to ensure everyone has equal opportunities to access the services they need to have a productive life.
- Recordings can be found on our YouTube page or by going to www.RideHIRT.com/BeyondTheBus

Topics and Speakers

Transportation's role in racial equity



Tamika L. Butler
Principal + Founder
Tamika L. Butler
Consulting LLC

The Impact COVID-19 has had on older riders



Kay Vanags
Aging Resources

Trends that impact accessible services



Emmanuel Smith
Disability Rights Iowa

Resources working to increase knowledge and access to transportation (panel)



Amy Conrick



**Jeremy Johnson-
Miller**



Carl Lingen

Breaking Down Barriers



Daniel Zinnel
CEO
Proteus, Inc.

Creating an inclusive environment



Max Mowitz
One Iowa

The ATCI Project

- HIRTA was awarded a grant to perform an unmet needs assessment focused on transportation for people with disabilities.
- We partnered with Easterseals Project Action using the “Accessible Transportation Community Initiative” (ATCI).
- Created coalitions and include stakeholders and community representatives. City, County, Economic Development, Healthcare, Dialysis, Agencies that serve those with Disabilities, Aging Resources, etc.
- Established three main goals and objectives for each of our groups.
- This group is now called the HIRTA Connections Coalition.

Objectives:

- Create and implement an inclusive education experience through social media, printed materials and website updates to attract new customers
- Create “target” audience marketing materials
- People with a variety of disabilities and those who serve them will be part of the process in helping us create appropriate content and materials to market our services. Is this written, radio, TV, social media?
- Feature those with Development and Physical Disabilities on the materials and messaging of our services.
- Create stories that people can relate too and highlight the important, convenience and fun of using Public Transit

IDEAS Grant

- HIRTA was awarded grant from the NADTC to support the development of a new equitable program to meet the needs of underserved populations specifically focused on improving transportation for people with disabilities, older adults, and marginalized populations.
- HIRTA was one of 9 grantees to receive the funding and has been awarded a grant for phase 2.
- Our goal is to make sure all underrepresented populations be more fully engaged and has a seat at the table to build on current planning efforts.

IDEAS Phase 1 Objectives

- Objective 1: Seek out marginalized voices and perspectives
- Objective 2: Communication and education for our communities
- Objective 3: Create equitable transit services
- Objective 4: Sustainability

IDEAS Phase 1 Findings

- Barriers for people with limited English Proficiencies
 - Long hold times
 - Language Link
 - Facebook page
- Desire for increased service hours and days
- One rider with disabilities said transportation is like a utility, everyone should have access and having service end at 5PM means they have a 5PM curfew.

IDEAS Phase 2 Objectives

- Objective 1: Create a more inclusive environment by having our scheduling software available in multiple languages
- Objective 2: Expand service by use of third-party providers
- Objective 3: Implement on-demand services so that people can move around communities like other travelers
- Objective 4: Sustainability

Flex Connect Overview

- HIRTA was engaged by CTAA to create a tool to meet the needs and priorities of the communities we serve.
- A pilot project to test checkpoint-style transit in Perry was identified.
- Riders can still call for door-to-door rides, but have a new option of showing up at a designated point within Perry to catch a HIRTA bus for in-town transit without a reservation.



Flex Connect
HIRTA

Program Details

- Hired a bilingual transit coordinator who is mindful of family dynamics, culture and gender to gain trust so those who need HIRTA's services feel safe, comfortable and welcome.
- Travel Training: one-on-one, small group and train-the-trainer
- Connect with new Latino riders to complete a questionnaire about their current lifestyle activity which will be tracked at 6 & 12 months. Allows us to collect ridership numbers, social determinants of health, and quality of life data.
- Create an educational campaign to reduce stigma and exclusion.
- Create marketing materials such as brochures, advertisements, mailers, etc.

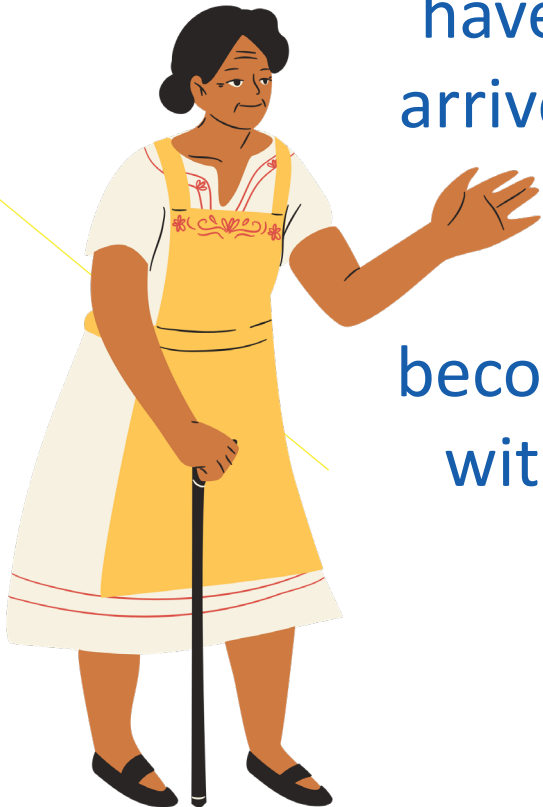


Why is this needed?

- The majority of the Latino population either have no vehicle or might have one which is often used for work, leaving the family at home without transportation
- The Latino population in Iowa is 6.3%. The Latino population in Perry is 34.9%. The number who currently use HIRTA is less than 1%.
- 50% of residents within the city of Perry, stated transportation was needed to improve their health
- Language, cultural differences, poverty, and transportation have been identified as the major barriers to services for Latinos.
- Those who are undocumented are reluctant to use government services, including HIRTA which requires personal information to schedule a trip, in fear of being reported to immigration.

Our Vision

Our vision is to provide a service where all customers can have quick and easy options to pay fares, board buses, and arrive safely and comfortably at their destination. We strive for a future where transit agency borders and service boundaries blur; where interconnected transit options become apparent and easy for users and where we operate with cultural competence. This is just one step in the right direction to make that happen.



Recommendations

Take the plunge. Taking the first step can be scary. You might be afraid to say or do the wrong thing –and you might. But even taking the first step towards inclusion is a win as long as the intentions are pure.

Learn. You don't have all the answers and you definitely don't understand all the viewpoints. Learn from the experts and from people with differing perspectives and experiences.

Listen. Don't dismiss someone's experience or try to invalidate their feelings. Especially if they are helping, listen and earnestly try to learn. Humans operate your agency and are responsible for the success. Their sense of belonging, inclusion, and emotional safety is your direct responsibility. Act like it. Do the work. Make the changes. Be better.

Be transparent. It's important to be honest with your communities. Be open with your data, efforts, and lessons. This helps build the trust going forward and your audience will appreciate it.

Teach. Share your learnings with others. Don't pretend to have all the answers, but you can most likely share something that someone else hasn't thought of before. It takes all of us so learn from others and teach others when you can.

More recommendations

Be transparent. You need to have data showing how many people of different religions, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, disabilities, etc. you have working and/or are serving before you know where you need to improve.

Use inclusive language. Truly comes down to just one thing; use the names and phrases that a person uses to self-identify. It's that simple. Inclusive language is about making others feel heard and respected.

Lean into discomfort. It is easier to ignore difficulties some people face, however, you have to learn how to have hard conversations, and make changes.

We all make mistakes. When someone calls you out for it, rather than getting defensive, apologize. Discuss what happened. Try to understand the problem along with the impact. Learn from it, and then move on gracefully.

Train. Inclusion isn't a one-and-done thing. It's ever-changing so it's important to seek out and continue trainings.

Resources

Diversity and Inclusion Terms/Language

<https://blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-terms/>

National RTAP Best Practice Spotlight-DEI in Public Transit

<https://www.nationalrtap.org/News/Best-Practices-Spotlight/Current-Diversity-Equity-and-Inclusion-in-Public-Transportation>

HIRTA Blog post about DEI

<https://www.ridehirta.com/hirta-featured-in-national-rtap-s-best-practices-for-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-public-transportation>

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the Nonprofit Sector

<https://bloomerang.co/resources/dei/>

Getting Ahead of the Curve with Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity – Video Training Free

<https://learning.candid.org/training/getting-ahead-of-the-curve-with-diversity-inclusion-and-equity/>

LGBTQ 101 – June 25, 2021

<https://oneiowa.org/event/freelgbtq101/>

Free LGBTQ 101 about the best practices for working with LGBTQ people, including pronouns, gender-neutral language, and the art of the apology

Thank you!

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www.rideHIRT.com

