

Executive Summary

Our group was originally tasked to build out a previously proposed and long dormant concept of an on-site meeting to provide orientation to new directors at LTAP/TTAP Centers. As we discussed the various agenda items that would comprise this meeting, it became clear that the needs and challenges faced by Center directors were also faced by new and existing staff in the larger Program community. We decided to expand our scope and analysis from a narrow single session for new directors to a broader set of meetings and communications tools that can better be defined as a professional development program for LTAP/TTAP. In doing so, we committed to making best use of the many communications and outreach tools at our disposal to create an environment where the transfer of needed professional and occupational knowledge, skills and abilities was continuous and organized rather than occasional and ad hoc.

We identified a number of factors that impact the type, breadth and depth of information needed among both new and existing LTAP/TTAP Centers. For example, the experience a new Center director brings to a Center can vary greatly, from an experienced director to someone with surface transportation experience but new to the LTAP/TTAP to someone completely new to the industry. LTAP/TTAP staff factors also vary across the Program. Staff members carry a very broad set of skills and abilities across FTEs and staff positions in our Centers. Furthermore, Centers often spilt and share occupations and roles across Center operations; Centers are often limited to 1 or two employees that are rarely 100% LTAP FTEs, and they are not always transportation-focused. Centers are also dealing with strained financial resources, leading to limited travel authorization for staff to access training and professional development opportunities.

The Center itself is also an important variable. Some Centers have access to resources, people and money that others do not; other Centers have complex relationships between their LTAP/TTAP funded efforts and other funded initiatives. The Center environment is also complicated, with different political hierarchy, staffing decisions and grantor/grantee affiliations.

The benefits of the coordinated and comprehensive program for training and professional development that we are presenting are many. In our view, a continuous, holistic professional development program will provide a common foundation of functional, practical Program information for new directors and staff. In clearly defining and promoting the roles and responsibilities of both Centers and the Program stakeholders, it will also serve as the first step to strengthen the bond of individual Centers to the national Program and create buy-in for Program efforts, initiatives and requirements. Furthermore, the plan is designed to be flexible yet comprehensive, allowing the various meetings, events and tools to be tailored to the meet specific and/or emerging needs of the community.

Expected Outcomes and Goals

- Facilitate Knowledge and Learning:
 - Orient new directors and staff
 - Provide continuing professional development to all staff
- Strengthen National Program and Augment Networking:
 - Buy in to National Program
 - Buy in to NLTAPA
 - Build relationships, improve peer-to-peer exchanges
- Improve Operations
 - Extend knowledge of program products and services
 - Connect new Centers into program performance reporting
 - Spur participation in national program activities and meetings

Recommendations

In the course of analyzing and discussing the merits, constituent parts and challenges of a comprehensive continuous professional development program for LTAP/TTAP, it became clear that the success of the initiative would be predicated on its effective implementation. To that end, we make the following recommendations to program leadership:

- **Adopt the entire plan, not just a few of its parts.** In our view, the various initiatives will have the greatest effect if they are part of a synergized, interrelated and reinforced program throughout the national LTAP/TTAP community.
- **Resist adding more participants to process tools.** Meetings and discussions will be more effective and efficient if participants are limited to the key staff necessary to communicate the information required. We should take great care not to overwhelm or inundate our targeted audience with redundant or excess information.
- **Commit the national LTAP/TTAP stakeholders to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in this document.** This professional development plan will require a significant and substantial effort from both FHWA and NLTAPA, and the stakeholders must work together to deliver results that are focused, aligned and accountable. We know our collective program resources are stretched to the limit; however, the need for professional development in LTAP/TTAP is acute. Main responsibilities are:
 - For FHWA – coordinate visits, reinforce participation
 - For NLTAPA – reinforce participation, support Professional Development working group
 - For Both – coordinate efforts, share information, reinforce Program throughout community

Process Implementation Timeline

- First draft to FHWA and Marie, update NLTAPA EC conference call [March 10]
- Close out initial feedback and edits from FHWA and Marie by COB Friday [March 14]
- Take revised draft to Strategic Planning Committee Meeting in Austin for reaction and feedback March [19-20]
- Finalize for Clearinghouse Steering Committee review by midweek March [24-28]
- Use next CSC checkpoint call for unveiling with a one week period for comments [TBD]
- Roll out as final deliverable at the regional meetings during [April-June]

Overview of the professional development plan

The strategy that we've developed utilizes a number of tools, some of which we currently use, others which we have available but have not previously used to their potential, and yet others to be developed. We will begin by explaining each of the tools individually. Following the explanation of each of the tools, we present a flowchart depicting how the tools fit together to provide Center directors and staff with a clearly defined strategy for training and professional development: the Training and Professional Development Lifecycle. In the final figure, we outline the roles and responsibilities of the FHWA, Clearinghouse and NLTAPA in ensuring that when a new director is appointed, the process runs smoothly and effectively.

Projected LTAP/TTAP Professional Development Tools

Initial Welcome Phone Call

Overall Responsibility:	FHWA [LTAP/TTAP Program Manager]
Target Audience:	New Center Director
Participants:	New Director [LTAP/TTAP Center], FHWA LTAP/TTAP Program Manager, FHWA LTAP/TTAP Clearinghouse Director, NLTAPA President or their designee
When and where:	Via phone within the first week
Expected duration:	15 minutes

Purpose: This short phone call is designed to welcome the new Center and its director to the LTAP/TTAP. As most managers in new jobs are somewhat overwhelmed in their first week on the job, the goal is to keep the information exchange to a minimum and simply let them know that there is a support system in place and people ready to help. Each of the three Program

participants on the call should very briefly describe their broad role in the Program and what their organization does on behalf of the national Program.

This call is also the first step and/or opportunity to both create an understanding of and set expectations for the Center as part of the national LTAP/TTAP. The call should broadly a) touch upon the part an individual Center plays in the Program, and b) impart the strategic concept of the national LTAP/TTAP and how FHWA and NLTAPA work together. The Director should also be directed to the web site and the Online LTAP/TTAP Academy for further detail and information. Finally, the site visit should be discussed with the Director and the process of scheduling and scoping the visit should begin.

Key Points:

- Keep the call short and focused – do not overwhelm the Director with information
- Maintain a tone of personal outreach rather than training – “we are here to help”
- Define the national roles and responsibilities of the three key entities and people in the national LTAP/TTAP in a “getting to know you” manner
- Focus on “brotherhood” and participation – engage the Center in national efforts
- Prepare the new Director for an orientation “package”, point to LTAP/TTAP Academy
- Schedule and scope the on-site meeting e.g. when, who should be there, peers etc
- Deliver follow up welcome email from Ch within one day to include password, Academy info and materials list

Onsite Orientation Meeting

Overall Responsibility: FHWA [LTAP/TTAP Program Manager]

Target Audience: New Center Director and Staff

Participants: New Director and Center staff [LTAP/TTAP Center], FHWA Program Manager and Support Staff, FHWA Clearinghouse Director, NLTAPA President or their EC designee, one/two LTAP/TTAP peers [as requested or designated by the Center]

When and where: At the Center within the first 30 days

Expected duration: 1.5 days

Purpose: This orientation effort is designed to give the new Center staff a complete and direct briefing on the national LTAP/TTAP and how it works. It is intended to be hands-on and Center focused. It will notify the Center of their responsibilities in the LTAP/TTAP as well as our expectations and hopes for their participation in the national Program. The focus will be to

provide details and knowledge on specific needs of the Center; seeing the Center facility, equipment etc. first-hand will allow the team to provide specific training, assistance and guidance on Center operations. FHWA and NLTAPA will also gain important insight into how the Center fits into the national structure, including such diverse elements as needs, politics, strengths and challenges.

Typical agenda items for the site visit would include:

- a briefing from the FHWA LTAP/TTAP Program Manager on the LTAP/TTAP, FHWA roles and responsibilities, recent Program efforts and achievements, and FHWA-driven Center requirements;
- a briefing from the FHWA LTAP/TTAP Clearinghouse Director on their roles and responsibilities, recent Clearinghouse efforts and achievements, and the resources, service and assistance available to the Center;
- a briefing from the NLTAPA President / EC Designee on NLTAPA, its roles and responsibilities, the value the association provides to its member Centers, and recent NLTAPA efforts and achievements;
- a briefing from FHWA Support Staff on the LTAP/TTAP Strategic Plan and performance reporting requirements and tools, including walk-through training on how to complete the forms;
- a tour of the facility to assess the Center and provide targeted assistance on Center operations; and
- roundtable discussions on various topics, including Center questions and comments, peer exchange information relative to the Center, and general Program operations.

Key Points

- Push leadership, knowledge, processes, and information to Center
- Pull leadership, management and operations knowledge and intelligence to Program leadership
- Maintain the “getting to know you” theme from the welcome call
- Transfer critical path operational knowledge to Center – performance reporting requirements, contractual obligations, operations issues and challenges
- Assure Center has more or less full understanding of the national Program by the end of the meeting

Online LTAP/TTAP Academy

Overall Responsibility: FHWA [LTAP/TTAP Clearinghouse Director]

Target Audience: New Directors, New Staff, Current Staff

When and where: Online 24/7

Participants: Everyone and Anyone

Purpose: The online LTAP/TTAP Academy will provide orientation tools, background and information that will serve as the foundation for new Centers Directors and staff to enter into the national Program. Additionally, the Academy will also serve as a continuing resource for current Center staff to reference. The LTAP/TTAP Academy is intended to be a thorough and comprehensive one stop shop for LTAP/TTAP information; users will be able to access current documentation on the Strategic Plan and Roles and Responsibilities, LTAP/TTAP organization and reporting, and relevant national efforts and initiatives.

Key Points:

- Designed as a self-paced learning tool accessible to any level of user
- Focused on the essential information Centers require to insure full participation in LTAP/TTAP
- Continuous updates of available information will encourage multiple visits, environment of continuous learning

Professional Development Roundtables

Overall Responsibility: FHWA [LTAP/TTAP Clearinghouse Director], NLTAPA [Professional Development Working Group Chair]

Target Audience: New Directors and New Staff (Session I); All Staff (Session II)

When and where: A half day event at the LTAP/TTAP National Conference

Participants: New Directors, New Staff, Current Staff

Expected duration: 30 minute introduction; three one-hour sessions

Purpose: This two-part series will facilitate peer-to-peer information exchange and networking in the LTAP/TTAP. New Directors and staff will participate in the first set of roundtables where topics will focus on their specific needs; later in the afternoon the discussions will be expanded to include any LTAP/TTAP staff interested in the roundtable topics. The overarching goals of these discussions will be to create a sense of community among new and existing LTAP/TTAPers and promote a culture of continuous knowledge exchange.

Key Points:

- Roundtables will be facilitated exercises with predetermined topics and outcomes
- Discussions will center on timely issues that impact participants
- Focus on occupational exchange to “raise the bar” on LTAP/TTAP staff performance
- Gather information on emerging issues to assure roundtables are needs-responsive

New Director Forums

Overall Responsibility:	NLTAPA [Professional Development Working Group Chair]
Target Audience:	New Directors
Participants:	FHWA [LTAP/TTAP Program Manager, LTAP/TTAP Clearinghouse Director], NLTAPA [Professional Development Working Group Chair], Additional Participants [TBD by NLTAPA Professional Development Working Group Chair]
When and where:	As part of the Professional Development Roundtables at the LTAP/TTAP National Conference; by invitation at the TRB Meetings
Expected Duration:	One hour sessions [National Conference Roundtables]; 2.5 hours [TRB Meeting]

Purpose: This forum represents the opportunity to facilitate peer-to-peer information exchange and networking. Sessions will be held as part of both the professional development roundtables at the National Conference as well as a stand-alone event at the TRB Meeting in Washington. This will allow for community support for new directors on a rough twice-a-year schedule.

The goals and intended outcomes are roughly the same as the professional development roundtables – create a sense of community, promote knowledge exchange etc – with the

additional motivation to provide specific touch points for new directors to share their issues and concerns as well as obtain needed insights from relevant experienced LTAP/TTAP personnel.

Key Points:

- Roundtables will be facilitated exercises with predetermined topics and outcomes
- Discussions will center on timely issues that impact participants
- Focus on responding to the challenges raised by new directors
- Gather information from community to assure roundtables are needs-responsive

Regional New Directors Forum

Overall Responsibility: NLTAPA [Executive Committee Regional Representative]

Target Audience: New Directors , New Staff

Participants: FHWA [LTAP/TTAP Program Manager and/or Support Staff, LTAP/TTAP Clearinghouse Staff attending] NLTAPA [Executive Committee Regional Representative], LTAP/TTAP Centers [Meeting Attendees], Additional Participants as [determined by NLTAPA EC Regional Representative]

When and where: Final agenda session/discussion at each Regional Meeting

Expected Duration: 15-30 minutes

Purpose: The Regional New Directors Forum will further facilitate peer-to-peer information exchange and networking on the regional level for all new staff. As with similar meeting-based efforts outlined above, the goals and intended outcomes are roughly the same – create a sense of community, promote knowledge exchange etc. The session is designed to take advantage of the more intimate environment of a regional meeting to provide an opportunity for new or “recently new” directors and staff to interact with peers on whatever level they require. Regional peers are also more likely to share operational issues with a given Center and are therefore more likely to offer useful, effective information or feedback.

Key Points:

- Further engender a sense of community and promote knowledge exchange – this time at the regional level among Center peers
- Flexible process based on the Center and the region – can be a structured discussion, a Q and A among attendees, or a free-flowing event

- Responds to the needs of the region and the community
- Provide opportunities for additional staff to participate, interact with peers from other Centers

Continuous Professional Development

Overall Responsibility: FHWA [TPP Team, LTAP/TTAP Clearinghouse Staff], NLTAPA [Leadership, Executive Committee / Working Group Chairs, EC Regional Representatives]

Target Audience: All LTAP/TTAP Staff

Participants: FHWA [OPCD Team, LTAP/TTAP Clearinghouse Staff], NLTAPA [Leadership, Executive Committee, Working Group Chairs, EC Regional Representatives], LTAP Centers [Center Directors and Staff as appropriate]

When and where: 24/7/365 – Multiple Opportunities and Tools

Purpose: These professional development tools will provide ongoing opportunities for staff at all levels of experience to increase their core competencies, skills and abilities. Their cumulative effect will serve to strengthen individual Centers and the national program through the consistent and continuous sharing of professional development information and initiatives.

The tools must be combined with a focused, aligned and accountable effort from all stakeholders in the national LTAP/TTAP to make the improvement of the professional capabilities of the Center community a priority.

The continuous professional development tools will include:

- FHWA LTAP/TTAP Webpage
- Clearinghouse E-news
- Sessions at Annual Meeting and TRB
- Sessions at regional meetings
- Use of FHWA Seminar Room
- Personal Outreach
- Mentoring
- Facilitated peer-to-peer exchanges

LTAP/TTAP Professional Development Process Flowcharts