

Chapter 1

This handbook provides an overview of public transit in Iowa and how to do business with the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), Office of Public Transit (OPT). It is intended to be a tool to assist transit managers navigate through the many policy, procedures and requirements of state and federal government. This handbook can be used to provide orientation for new personnel; to help clarify the relationships and required procedures for existing personnel; and to provide easier accessibility to regulations and procedures. Input on the content of the handbook to increase its usefulness is encouraged at any time.

Role of Iowa Department of Transportation

The Iowa DOT is responsible for the administration of state and federal transit programs through OPT. OPT provides funding and technical assistance, as well as many other services and program oversight functions, in carrying out the office's purpose of promoting and supporting public transportation throughout Iowa. As recipients of funding administered by the Iowa DOT and users of the transportation network, transit systems interact with the Iowa DOT to carry out their public transportation mission.

[Chapter 307](#) of the [Code of Iowa](#) gives the department the responsibility to identify needs of public transportation, collect data, and apply for, accept and disperse funds for the improvement of mass transit. [Chapter 324A](#) of the [Code of Iowa](#) defines regional and urban transit systems, provides for the coordination of services, and discusses the role in the distribution of state funds.

Office of Public Transit

OPT is an office within the Modal Division of the Iowa Department of Transportation. The mission of OPT is to advocate and deliver services that support and promote a safe and comprehensive transit system in Iowa that enhances Iowans access to opportunities and improves quality of life.

For more information on OPT and for a listing of staff responsible for the various transit duties and the many services provided by the office, please visit: <http://www.iatransit.com/office/staff.asp>.

Major functions of the Office of Public Transit include:

- Administering state transit assistance funding;
- Administering the Public Transit Infrastructure Grant Program;
- Administering the intercity bus program;
- Applying for and administering federal funds to rural transit systems and small urban systems;
- Applying for and administering federal statewide capital funds, JARC funds and New Freedom funds;
- Developing the transit portion of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP);
- Allocating federal funds for urban transit systems in cities with populations between 50,000 and 200,000;

- Promoting coordination of public transportation by agencies receiving public funds;
- Assuring compliance with state and federal requirements;
- Providing technical assistance and training;
- Developing and maintaining a website (<http://www.iatransit.com>) and
- Advocating and promoting the use of public transit in Iowa.