



ABOUT COMTO

Moving the Nation

*The premier organization for the training, education and professional development of
minority transportation officials*

Mission

To ensure a level playing field and maximum participation in the transportation industry for minority individuals, businesses, and communities of color through advocacy, information sharing, training, educational and professional development.

Membership

COMTO has 38 chapters throughout the United States. Members include individual, transportation agencies, academic institutions, industry non-profits and Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs). From highways and roads to mass transit systems, subways to rail systems and port authorities to airports, COMTO members represent every level of the transportation industry. Our members are the presidents and chief executive officers who determine the direction of major transportation systems and the mechanics and operators who ensure the safe passage of millions of transportation riders every day. For more information on membership, please contact Amelia Seaton

National Meeting and Training Conference

This annual meeting brings together a network of approximately 1000 persons from all across the country. It provides a forum to participate in disseminating valuable industry information as well as the opportunity to become more informed on issues critical to our industry. This conference is the premier opportunity for professional development for those participating in our comprehensive educational forums. Next year's meeting will take place July 2009 in Dallas, TX.

History

Founded in 1971 on the campus of Howard University by Rev. Jerry Moore and Harold B. Williams, the Conference Of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) was created to provide a forum for senior level minority professionals in the transportation industry. It was an occasion to act, born of the need to address the inequities of a rapidly expanding industry within which its minority workers, *upon whose shoulders the industry was built*, were not allowed the same access to employment, promotion and contract opportunities. It was recognized by its founders from the beginning that COMTO was positioning itself for a long and arduous but rewarding history.

Since its inception, COMTO has continued to evolve to become the premier organization for the training, education and professional development of minority transportation professionals. From the advancement of Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs), legislative initiatives, scholarship and program opportunities our scope is varied and far reaching. We have chronicled numerous successes and victories. But, the true measure of how far we have come is revealed by the talent, tenacity and accomplishments of our members who have joined forces to correct the inequities of the past and chart the direction of the future.



COMTO Recommendations for the Transition Team/Agency Working Group for the U.S. DOT

I. Diversity in the Transportation Industry

- A. Workforce: Both the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU and the FAA legislation need to include provisions to ensure diversity in the transportation industry. Assurance of a diversified workforce will require earmark funding for outreach and training, as well as for an educational campaign to espouse the benefits and opportunities of a career in the transportation sector.

Recommendation: Earmark funding for a national clearinghouse database to assure the identification, attraction, recruitment and retention of minority transportation professionals. COMTO, the only association which works to ensure a level playing field for minorities in all modes of transportation, would establish and maintain this database.

1. Transit and Highways: The Transportation Research Board (TRB) recently conducted a study titled *Race and Gender Diversity in State DOTs and Public Transit Agencies*. The research team was unable to establish a baseline for determining the number of women and minorities in state DOTs and public transit agencies because of the lack of consistent and accurate reporting. In addition, neither the Federal Highway nor Federal Transit Administrations were able to produce the needed data to establish the baselines. Per the CFR, federal grantees are required to provide accurate, timely and thorough data to the DOT. However, the majority of state DOTs and public transit agencies are not. Currently, there is no electronic process for reporting this data. The US DOT is still utilizing manual forms which were used when FTA was known as UMTA – as is evidenced by the “UMTA” identification on the forms.
2. Senior Executives in Transit: With over 6,500 transit agencies in the US, only 38 employ CEOs of color. Of the 38 CEO's, less than half are direct hires of the agencies. The majority are employed by consultant firms that manage the transit services for the respective agencies. Approximately \$10 billion annually is spent in public transit fares. More than half of these fares are paid by people of color who also serve as the largest share of the transit industry's tax base. These numbers show the tremendous disparity with minority leadership in public transit.

Recommendations:

- *An electronic EEO reporting process should be established to determine a credible baseline of minorities and women within the transportation sector, especially for entities that receive federal funds.*
 - *There should be a new federally funded training program for workforce development and the advancement of senior and middle management careers.*
 - *Federal transportation grant recipients and sub recipients should be required to use funds for training and outreach.*
 - *Incentives for training and hiring minorities and women should be allowed and encouraged in all transportation contracts supported with federal funds.*
 - *A best practices Web site for outreach, training and education of the workforce whether by direct employment or through contract should be established (NYC MTA and Missouri DOT have good practices as a start).*
 - *Federal funds should be used to establish a web based national clearinghouse of resumes for minorities for senior management transportation positions.*
 - *There should be a federal requirement for an annual review and report of HR practices and results related to minority outreach and hiring conducted by Boards of Directors or other senior management configurations of transportation entities; and this should include federal audits to ensure compliance.*
3. Aviation: Next Generation of ATCS: Over the next 10 Years, the Federal Aviation Administration will hire 100,000 Air Traffic Control Specialists (ATCS). COMTO has the bandwidth across the Nation to not only assist with the recruitment efforts, but to also facilitate in the assurance of a diverse pool of ATCS.

Recommendation: COMTO currently has a collaborative with the FTA to recruit the next generation of transit professionals. This successful collaborative, which is in its third year, involves a partnership among the FTA, COMTO, public and private sectors and academia to identify, attract, recruit, and retain the next generation of transit professionals. FTA should adopt the same model and leverage on COMTO's band-width to do the same for the next generation of ATCS.



B. Policy

Decision making organizations which affect or impact our Nation's transportation policy, lack the diversity needed to guarantee the interest of all people. In particular those that lack diversity include: 1) National Highway Transportation Safety Board; 2) National Academies of Sciences/Transportation Research Board; 3) Metropolitan Planning Organizations across the U.S.

Recommendation: Funding for outreach and training is needed in order to ensure decision making organizations reflect the communities they serve. Appointing authorities should be required to report on outreach efforts to ensure a diverse board of decision makers.

II. Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB)

Congress enacted the DOT DBE program to address the problem of discrimination against businesses owned by women and minorities in federally-supported transportation contracting. Over the years, the program has helped provide opportunities to thousands of businesses. Unfortunately, despite advances, more than two decades after the DBE program was established, discrimination still remains a serious problem. Disparity and other studies have documented well the ongoing problems faced by DBEs and ACDBEs in both the public and private markets. Provisions of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and of the 1998 Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) contained minimum 10% national aspirational DBE participation goals.

- *Recommendations for SAFETEA LU and FAA Bill:*
- *Disparities studies should be required for every state and supported with federal funds*
- *A growth model should be outlined by DOT to establish incentives and promote greater participation by DBEs to seek out federally supported transportation contracts, and this should include education and training about building a business, including access to capital*
- *UCP and DBE certification processes should be clearly standardized with compliance reviews to ensure consistency*
- *Transit vehicle manufacturers compliance with the DBE program should be reviewed to analyze how DBEs can secure more opportunity in this important transportation funding item, which is exempted from DOT funding recipient goals*
- *UCP state, regional or national reciprocity certifications should be reviewed, encouraged and standardized with federal program support; the review should be coupled with compliance and enforcement mechanisms*

III. Vulnerable Populations

Two separate reviews of how transit agencies prepare for emergencies with a focus on vulnerable populations (i.e. transit-dependent, disabled, poor, low English proficiency, racial and ethnic minorities, etc.) were conducted by the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Civil Rights and the Conference on Minority Transportation Officials respectively. FTA's 12-month review culminated in the May 1st release of Transportation Equity in Emergencies: A Review of the Practices of State Departments of Transportation, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and Transit Agencies in 20 Metropolitan Areas. COMTO's expedited 2-month review –completed with a white paper entitled Emergency Preparedness and Response for Vulnerable Populations. Both reports summarized existing preparedness and recovery policies and processes regarding vulnerable populations.

Recommendation: Funding for the continued identification and dissemination of best internal and external planning, response, and recovery policies and practices pertaining to weather-related emergencies with an emphasis on specific outreach to vulnerable populations.