“Ensuring that our veterans and military families have access to quality, convenient transportation is just one way we can thank them for their service. With these transportation grants, we will help connect veterans and military families with the jobs and training opportunities they deserve, as well as the medical care and other services they need, all located close to home.” U.S. DOT Secretary Ray LaHood
The Veterans’ Transportation Online Dialogue:

*Strengthening Transportation Choices So We Can Serve Those Who Have Served Their Country*

Report on the Findings of the Dialogue Provided to the Federal Transit Administration

by Easter Seals Project ACTION

July 30, 2012
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Background

From May 7 to June 8, Easter Seals Project ACTION (ESPA) held a third major online dialogue to assist the Federal Transit Administration with information to complement the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative. The reason is clear—we must serve those who have served their country. There are over 23M veterans today¹ and veterans over 60 are the largest demographic group—12.5M. Estimates suggest that 2.3M veterans live with some type of disability.² The U.S. Department of Defense estimates 233,000 soldiers were diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries from 2000 to 2011. Unemployment rates for veterans under 24 is an astounding 29% vs. an unemployment rate of approximately 8% overall for veterans.³ Thus, throughout the US, there is an ever-growing need to support veterans and military families. Assisting with community reintegration for veterans with disabilities ensures access to services. Transportation is one of the key services everyone needs for community-based living. The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration recognized this need and developed the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative (VTCLI), committing over $60 million for innovative projects and partnerships to enhance access to local transportation services to meet the needs of returning service members, including wounded warriors and veterans as well as their families. This vitally important effort with over 119 grants to date, connects veterans, service members and their families with the opportunities they need and deserve—from jobs and job training centers to schools, hospitals, day care centers, and recreation.

As the community grantees of VTCLI programs begin their work, information was needed on the issues, barriers, and possible ways to address the transportation needs of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families. ESPA organized and managed an online dialogue on veterans’ transportation to seek answers and find solutions regarding veterans transportation. This was the third major online dialogue held on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL) Social Networking Online Dialogue Project. The project is supported with funding provided to the United We Ride program through the Office of Disability Employment Policy at DOL through June 8, 2012. The online event utilized a relatively new social networking tool called “online dialogue.” This type of web-based tool allows any interested stakeholder to share information 24/7 on a topic by submitting an idea, commenting on an idea or voting on an idea, and site visitors have the choice to register and participate or just view the site. The veterans’ transportation online dialogue sought involvement from veterans, military service members and their families as well as providers of transportation and human services across four areas: overcoming barriers, communications, policy issues, and getting a ride. The dialogue site remains live for those who want to peruse the details of the results: http://veteransdialogue.ideascale.com/.

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² American Community Survey of 2009.
Implementing the Online Dialogue

The veterans’ transportation online dialogue process followed the best practices derived from earlier dialogues. High level executives invited participants to participate—much like being invited to a briefing or major event. Catalysts, experts across the spectrum of stakeholders from whom information was sought, helped kick-off the dialogue in the early days and maintained involvement. Detailed planning meetings were held for months prior to beginning the dialogue where content was work-shopped in a facilitated participatory environment with the principles involved in the activity. Key partners were integral with outreach, and regular communication publicized and encouraged participation.

This online event had excellent results both in terms of the aggregate number of people who participated, the quality of the information shared by participants and the level of executive and partner support in driving participation. At the launch of the dialogue, for example, U.S. DOT Secretary Ray La Hood invited attendance both through a video and on the U.S. DOT website, in his Fastlane award-winning blog. Later, the White House re-blogged his thoughts:

Share Your Ideas for Improving Transportation for Veterans

Yesterday, DOT helped launch a national dialogue on strengthening transportation choices for America’s military veterans, wounded warriors, and their families. This online conversation, “Strengthening Transportation Choices So We Can Serve Those Who Have Served Their Country,” is open until June 8, and we invite those interested in helping veterans and service members to participate by visiting veteransdialogue.ideascale.com. The benefits Americans enjoy today wouldn’t be possible without the courageous service of our nation's veterans. So when they return home, we must turn our sincere appreciation of the men and women who bravely protect and defend the United States of America into action. We must help them and their families find meaningful work, a good education, and quality medical care—none of which is possible without access to reliable, affordable transportation. That’s why the Federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility and the Department of Defense are sponsoring this first-ever online exchange of ideas about the transportation options veterans need and how we can help make those options available to our returning heroes and their families. […]

Another video featuring U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) General Deputy Assistant Secretary Brian Greene thanked veterans for their service, shared information about housing information and programs for veterans, and announced the dialogue. FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff and Deputy Administrator Therese W. McMillan both encouraged participation during their speeches at major transportation association events. In addition, Easter Seals, VETs First of United Spinal, the American Public Transportation Association, and the Community Transportation Association of America did special outreach efforts.

4 White House Re-blog of Secy. LaHood’s FastLane, from URL: http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/05/14/share-your-ideas-improving-transportation-veterans, retrieved 6-13-2012.
Carefully-crafted outreach efforts and executive invitations highlighting the importance of this dialogue fueled strong citizen engagement. Over two thousand people (i.e., 2,241) visited the site with 20% choosing to register and fully participate for a total of 459 registered users. This conversion rate, or the rate at which people who come to the site actually register, is the same as the United We Ride Transportation Coordination Online Dialogue conducted in 2010 and close to the 24% conversion rate of the Paratransit Online Dialogue the same year. These 459 participants generated 1,073 actions—78 ideas, 239 comments and 756 votes—and represent our most engaged set of registered users of any dialogue to date. Several ratios show the level of engagement, such as idea generation and volume of feedback. In the past, the best ratio of actions to ideas was 9.1 in the United We Ride Transportation Coordination Dialogue. In the veterans’ transportation dialogue, it was 12.7—so the number of actions (total of votes and comments per each idea) was 40% higher. The 459 participants provided on average 2.3 actions each, which is a similar ratio to earlier dialogues. The level of interest in providing input is also found in voting behavior. The number of votes an idea generates helps us understand which ideas participants feel are the most important. When using an online dialogue to seek ideas about ways to address an issue, the organizers should keep in mind that ideas which generate the most votes may also be those that should be given the highest priority for future action. The veterans’ transportation online dialogue had the highest volume of votes to idea ratio—9.7 votes for each idea. That action rate is a 70% increase over the results from earlier dialogues, which were 5.5 and 5.7. The numeric results from indicators in this dialogue suggest that the way this dialogue was implemented is worth in-depth exploration for potential high-impact best practices.

One of the unique attributes was the outreach that took place through an array of agencies and organizations that both announced and provided links to the dialogue from their websites. Half of those websites belong to federal sources, including the White House, DOT, FTA, Secretary LaHood’s Fastlane Blog, and GovDelivery.com. ESPA’s homepage was, however, the major referral site with 70 more referrals than the second highest site, which was fta.dot.gov.

Table 1: Top References by Visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top References</th>
<th>Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>projectaction.org</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fta.dot.gov</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov.Delivery</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White House</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOT</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fastline</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahoo Mail</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVA</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following chart summarizes registrant primary areas of interest for those who chose to register and provide such information:

Table 2: Primary Area of Interest for Registrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Interest</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Transportation</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Services</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human services transportation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Transportation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private transportation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability services</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment and workforce</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging Services</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and economic development</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Themes and Ideas for Veterans’ Transportation from the Participants

“So, funding is limited and seems to be a major issue for all. Right? There are so many ways to get creative with how we spend our budgets […] Far too often programs compartmentalize their funding or fleet. Those funds can be used to share transportation costs with other programs. […]” Idea submitted to coordinate funding.

Out of the 78 ideas submitted by the participants, three over-arching themes emerged: innovative funding or suggestions around funding needs/barriers; the need for greater collaboration/coordination and coalition building and barriers when coordination is not being done; and the promise of technology as an enabler of transportation access. A number of respondents also noted the challenges associated with rural communities and transportation. Of the top five ideas for which participants voted, two were associated
with funding approaches, two with technology, and one with collaboration; these themes often intersected, demonstrating the association between all three areas. In addition to these major themes, a number of other issues, needs and suggestions arose around caregiver support, education/outreach, using volunteer driver programs, mobility management, and the special nature and challenges of addressing rural transportation.

Innovative funding suggestions ranged from a need for more operational funding to specialized free or reduced fares for veterans to merging with technology initiatives such as using smartphones and smartcards to provide special fares to veterans. There was strong evidence in the comments of concerns over not enough funding or siloed funding. A number of suggestions surfaced around a military pass that might be free, donated, half price or provided by public transit with reimbursement from the VA. One creative participant recommended, “We redesign the VA ID Card so that the federal government can reimburse Public Transit agencies for providing transit services to all military veterans.” Appendix I has key ideas categorized by topic with the full text of the idea. Sixteen of the seventy-eight ideas referenced suggestions around funding and fare processes. Another interesting idea suggested frequent traveler points, another suggested a veterans’ transportation tax. Above all, many respondents felt veterans should have access to free or reduced fares possibly through some sort of special ID or transit pass.

Technology was often mentioned as an enabler, and commentary from participants reinforced the importance of a national focus on call centers. Six of the seven ideas associated with technology mentioned one call centers with discussions regarding databases, systems like 211/511 and the ways these types of technology assist with coordination and access to transportation options. One idea shared by a veteran recommended using smartphones:

“Our idea, selfish as it is, is to develop a central database for transportation options (free and those that cost) for veterans and their families and then to serve this information easily and simply to smartphones, which can automatically geolocate a user and show them transportation options “around me.” Many veterans who cannot afford a personal computer and may need transportation the most are instead opting to purchase a smartphone as their means to connect to the Internet, text messaging, phone lines […]”

These ideas provide discrete actions that are possible in the current VTCLI program and demonstrate the utility of the focus on one call centers.

The importance of collaboration and coordination was the primary theme; twenty of the seventy-eight ideas were associated with either the barriers when there is a lack of coordination or the promise of increased collaboration. Many participants recommended collaboration between military bases, VA hospitals, and public transportation but noted there was a lack of communication between the entities. This theme intersected as well with technology as an enabler of greater coordination:
“One of the challenges to coordinating operations between human service transportation providers and MSO/VSO transportation providers is the lack of easy mechanisms for being able to send trip request or vehicle availability information between providers. Aside from phone calls and faxes, there is no straightforward and secure means to communicate between systems unless perhaps the providers are using the same scheduling & dispatch software.”

Coordination was recommended as a way to address rural issues: “Coordinate a multistage effort to arrange and reduce problems with veterans' transportation to medical treatment facilities. Medical treatment facilities can work with transit agencies to block specific dates for veterans living in remote access areas that use local transit agencies to provide service. In cases where the two agencies cannot resolve the issue, the county veterans service agency should get involved to help resolve the issue and provide oversight until the process runs smoothly.” Other ideas around coordination were to share resources, deploy mobility managers, get veterans on transit boards, connect with VISN's, breakdown silos between the VA and public transit, and coordinate education and outreach programs. One respondent said: “Returning veterans from war need [the] best counsel[ing] from community colleges located in their county or nearer community colleges near their county.”

When the results of the dialogue are organized by major areas of inquiry, there are anywhere from one to four ideas in each category that garnered the most support from votes. A crosswalk between key themes and top voted ideas provide seven substantive ideas that rise to the top:

**Funding**
- Provide operational funding for transportation services
- Create half-fares for veterans; Improve rural transportation for veterans
- Add transit benefits to the VA SmartCard
- Provide more funding for rural transportation

**Technology**
- Centralize transportation options via the use of smartphones

**Collaboration**
- Partner to improve/enhance veterans transportation especially in rural areas
- Implement travel training
- Create partnerships between senior and veterans' transportation options
- Encourage VA hospitals to collaborate with transit

In many cases, these ideas had detailed explanations and commentary from those who offered them. Given the unique vantage points and perspective from each of the individuals generating the ideas, each idea is repeated exactly as proposed:
1. Transportation: 51 votes

Transportation is always cited as a top concern. Yet all programs and initiatives offer capital funding, which is not always the problem for transportation systems. Operating funding is one of our top obstacles to facilitate providing transportation for Veterans. Municipal boundaries between urban and rural areas also need to be less restrictive.

2. Centralize Transportation Options via Smartphone Access: 41 votes

The Veteran populations of America, young and old, are continuing to access resources and services via their mobile and tablet devices. Yet, many government services and even local community transportation services go unknown to Veterans and their Families as they move to new neighborhoods or attend Military training (if in the National Guard) in distant, unfamiliar geographic areas. Our idea, selfish as it is, is to develop a central database for transportation options (free and those that cost) for Veterans and their Families and then to serve this information easily and simply to smartphones, which can automatically geolocate a user and show them transportation options “around me.” Many Veterans who cannot afford a personal computer and may need transportation the most are instead opting to purchase a smartphone as their means to connect to the Internet, text messaging, phone lines, and as a status symbol - YET - there are almost zero choices for Veterans in the iPhone and Droid marketplaces, especially transportation related Veteran apps. We would love to discuss this idea in this open forum and determine the ideal mobile phone needs of Veteran transportation services. Many times Veterans cannot get to a job interview or get to their 2nd or 3rd job because of the lack of transportation. The more we can do to empower Vets to know what transportation options are available to them, anywhere, anytime, the more job opportunities will then be open to our country’s civilian soldiers and the tragic unemployment statistics can begin to decrease.

3. Half-fare for Veterans: 35 votes

To encourage Veterans to use Public Transportation, I recommend that Congress amend Section 5307(d)(1)(D) of Title 49 of the U.S. Code to include that Veterans presenting military identification cards during the operation of off peak-hour, fixed route service are entitled to travel for half the peak fixed route fare. This will grant non-disabled Veterans the same level of benefit as the elderly, persons with disabilities, or passengers presenting Medicare cards, to show our country’s appreciation for their military service.

4. Rural Transportation: 33 votes

Living in a rural community, we find the greatest challenge our veterans face is finding transportation to the services they need. There is public transportation in only one city. We developed a program to provide volunteer transportation, yet it receives no funding. We rely solely on donations and grants. Rural transportation is a serious issue in allowing our veterans to access medical services, mental health services, jobs, social services and access to Veteran Centers. Funding needs to go to these types of providers out in the field providing the services our veterans need.
5. Transit Benefits for Veterans with new VA SmartCard ID: 27 votes

We should discuss how to provide public transportation to all Veterans (at no cost to the Veteran), with fares reimbursed to the transit agencies by the Federal Government. To accomplish this, I suggest we redesign the VA ID Card so that the Federal Government can reimburse Public Transit agencies for providing transit services to all military Veterans. From a policy standpoint, it would be ideal if the reimbursement could be used by Transit Agencies for either operating costs or capital expenditures. Providing national public transit service benefits to all registered Veterans nationwide would allow many Veterans the opportunity to remain independent and improve their quality of life, especially as many Veterans struggle with transportation issues and reduced mobility due to their military service or age. One useful by-product of this policy would be that it would yield data which Transit Agencies and the DOT could utilize to identify patterns of use and areas of need, in order to allocate resources more efficiently. Additionally, this federal policy can be implemented with little or no initial cost as it utilizes existing public transit systems nationwide. In fact, the only start-up costs would involve developing new VA ID Cards with similar features to the ID Cards for Active or Retired Military. Another minor cost would involve RFID card readers at vending machines or on vehicles.

6. Need to partner, not create new veteran medical only systems: 25 votes

My experience has been that it is very difficult to find who to talk to within veterans organizations. I have talked to different veterans organizations, VSOs, Dept. of VA and VA hospitals and they all have differing views on transportation and what can and needs to be done. There is a movement to create mobility managers and new accessible transportation programs within veteran systems. Two problems with this are that the new transportation is for medical purposes only and vets need so much more than that and there are already well-coordinated systems that veterans can take advantage of if the organizations come to the table. I fear we are just creating more silos instead of working together with what is already being coordinated in an area.

7. Encourage VA Hospitals to Collaborate with Transit: 23 votes

Our transit system would love to work directly with the closest VA Hospital so that we can get vets there, but they have so many restrictions that it seems they can’t even talk to us. We can’t even call them unless we go through a board member who has a military ID. One local group has a van making trips to the hospital, but it’s not accessible. We’d like to help with that, but we can’t seem to get the communication lines open.

8. Fund Rural Transportation: 20 votes

I have been working on planning and development of rural transportation systems that will serve the entire community for over two decades. Whether it is services for seniors, welfare to work, our veterans or the general public, the issue is FUNDING. We don’t sufficiently fund rural transportation. It is time to stop
nibbling around the edges. The problems have been the same for my entire career...programs in silos and inadequate financial resources! Dramatically increase the funding; lower the match requirements; streamline the regulations; to solve a lot of problems for everyone who needs the ride.

9. Travel Training: 18 votes

Many people learn to use public transportation with the assistance of a travel trainer. What information to travel trainers need to know to better service members of the military community and their families?

10. Senior Transportation and Veterans Transportation: 18 votes

I just read that Regional Valley Transit in Idaho has donated a wheelchair-accessible bus to Parma Senior Center. The Center will use the bus to provide transportation for two primary activities, one of which will be transportation to the Veterans Medical Center. Is this a model of partnership (public transit and senior center) that it would be helpful to replicate in other communities?

Within the four categories of inquiry, overcoming barriers generated the most ideas—18. Two categories generated the same number of ideas, provider perspectives on partnerships and policy—16 each. The area of communication stimulated more suggestions for providers than for individuals—11 and 3, respectively. Second to overcoming barriers for individuals was getting a ride—11 ideas. For more information on the top ideas by the areas where either providers or individuals gave suggested, see the following Table that lists the top three to four ideas by category with the number of votes each idea received:
Table 3: Top Ideas by Category of Inquiry for Veterans' Transportation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>Number of votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provider Policy Recommendations</td>
<td>Provide half fare for Veterans</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide transit benefits to Veterans via a smart card</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide more funding for rural transportation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government entities need to work together</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider Partnership Recommendations</td>
<td>Partner don’t create separate Veterans medical only systems</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partner between senior and Veteran transportation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support innovation at the VA</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider Communication Recommendations</td>
<td>Create a one-call volunteer transportation service</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Centralize transportation options via smartphone access</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage VA hospitals to collaborate with transit</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use Veterans networks to find volunteers</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information share across silos</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals’ recommendations for</td>
<td>Provide a military transit benefit</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals’ identification of major</td>
<td>Rural transportation</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barriers or ways to overcome them</td>
<td>Travel training can help overcome barriers</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support Veterans’ Caregivers</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Let public transit buses on post</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals’ suggestions for getting</td>
<td>More operational funding for transportation</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a ride</td>
<td>Provide a mass transit subsidy to Veterans</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinate and increase access to transportation options</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary and Next Steps

The dialogue reached its intended audience with a mix of interest with those participating between public transportation (31%) and veterans’ services (27%). Participants on the site came from all of the US with concentrations in the District of Columbia, California, Illinois, Oregon, Virginia, Colorado, and Iowa. Visitors to the site came from all over the U.S. and Puerto Rico and, in some cases, around the world, including Canada, India, Japan, Senegal, Guam, U.K., and Australia. Visitors from ten cities comprised 30% of the total number of visitors: Washington, District of Columbia, 587 visits; San Antonio, Texas, 78 visits; New York, New York, 76 visits; San Jose, California, 54 visits; Chicago, Illinois, 54 visits; Portland, Oregon, 42 visits; Los Angeles, California, 40 visits; Arlington, Virginia, 38 visits; Denver, Colorado, 35; and Ames, Iowa 34 visits. The following map shows the cities and concentrations of visitors.

The many veterans, individuals from veterans’ services organizations, public transportation providers, human services providers, medical transportation providers, private transportation providers, and advocates who took the time to participate provided compelling ideas for future action. The success and information generated through this project shows the utility of social media to find answers to pressing needs. The veterans’ transportation online dialogue provided substantive, actionable ideas to enhance transportation for those who have so unselfishly served their country. By all measures, the Strengthening Transportation Choices So We Can Serve Those Who Have Served Their Country national online dialogue was a success. With the depth of engagement and the substantial number of detailed suggestions participants generated, the results provide leaders at FTA a rich source of ideas and guidance for future action in their efforts to help meet the transportation needs of our nations’ veterans, active-duty military members and their families. As FTA Administrator Rogoff notes: “America’s war heroes deserve a chance to support their families, participate in their communities, receive job training and get to work. It’s vitally important that we remove barriers to success by making transportation available wherever our veterans choose to live, work and receive care.”
Appendix I – Major Themes and Idea Text

Innovative Funding or Suggested Funding

• 1 (barrier) NOT ENOUGH OPERATIONAL FUNDING Transportation is always cited as a top concern. Yet all programs and initiatives offer capital funding, which is not always the problem for transportation systems. Operating funding is one of our top obstacles to facilitate providing transportation for Veterans. Municipal boundaries between urban and rural areas also need to be less restrictive.

• 3 (solution) HALF PEAK FARE To encourage Veterans to use Public Transportation, I recommend that Congress amend Section 5307(d)(1)(D) of Title 49 of the U.S. Code to include that Veterans presenting military identification cards during the operation of off peak-hour, fixed route service are entitled to travel for half the peak fixed route fare. This will grant non-disabled Veterans the same level of benefit as the elderly, persons with disabilities, or passengers presenting Medicare cards, to show our country’s appreciation for their military service.

• 5 (solution) USE VA ID CARD We should discuss how to provide public transportation to all Veterans (at no cost to the Veteran), with fares reimbursed to the transit agencies by the Federal Government. To accomplish this, I suggest we redesign the VA ID Card so that the Federal Government can reimburse Public Transit agencies for providing transit services to all military Veterans.

• 13 (solution) DONATE PASSES Public Transit Agencies should consider a program such as one that “adopts” a Veteran bus pass and or transportation ride. Give the local community the opportunity to purchase bus passes that can then be donated to local Veteran Organizations that they can distribute to Veterans who have a need to use public transit fixed routes, ADA paratransit services and Rural Demand response services.

• 22 (barrier) NEED MORE RURAL FUNDING I have been working on planning and development of rural transportation systems that will serve the entire community for over two decades. Whether it is services for seniors, welfare to work, our veterans or the general public, the issue is FUNDING. We don’t sufficiently fund rural transportation. It is time to stop nibbling around the edges. The problems have been the same for my entire career...programs in silos and inadequate financial resources! Dramatically increase the funding; lower the match requirements; streamline the regulations; to solve a lot of problems for everyone who needs the ride.

• 25 (barrier) MILITARY SUPPORT OF MASS TRANSIT BENEFIT Military reimburses military personnel (and other government employees) when they use public transit to travel to and from work. Why are local military installations allowed to “opt out” (or basically ignore) the Presidential Executive Order? I live in a community where the military installation has done nothing about the Mass Transit Benefit Program by setting up a system to communicate the advantages and encourage military and other governmental employees to use the public transit. And, yet, we are going to receive a large contingent of additional military and Department of Defense civilian employees in the near future. We are trying to become a
community that is less POV dependent and this position by military personnel is a barrier to achieve that.

• **30 (solution) HELP PURCHASE ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES FOR VETS** Often access to an accessible vehicle is one of the first barriers. Programs that offer support and provide opportunities for veterans or service members with disabilities to purchase an accessible vehicle or make modifications to their own vehicle can help increase independence to veterans and offer support for family members. Vehicle conversion/modification programs may work well for veterans or service members living in rural communities.

• **31 (solution) VET TRANSPORTATION TAX** 1. Just as they have sales tax, school tax, cell phone tax, etc. there should be a tax VET transportation tax that is collected from citizens to fund this initiative; this will need to be further evaluated to determine what would be the best tax structure for this where a nominal tax is collected. For example if you had a population of 3M people and you collected .15 tax, that would be a total of $450K…cents adds up!

• **34 (solution) TRANSIT PASS** Similar to a Rail pass gives those who purchase it 30 days of travel via participating mass transit and also pays a portion of all such tickets for Veterans, and the elderly.

• **36 (solutions) SUPPORT VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAMS** My thoughts on what may work is to have federal financial support that is both flexible and realistic. Each area is different and has its own veteran transportation needs. A program should have the background checks, proof of insurance, license, and reasonable vehicle safety, of course. There should be mileage reimbursement. In Boulder County, we have an organization that provides many services for veterans and their families. Transportation is just one of them. Veteran and family members volunteer to drive older and/or disabled veterans to VA facilities outside of the county in Denver, Fort Collins, Greeley, and Cheyenne. We don’t provide transportation within the county because other agencies already provide that service. Many of our volunteers are also clients who receive other services. They have a loyalty to veterans, so they are willing to go on these long drives. They get mileage reimbursement, although some won’t take it. Funding that would cover background checks and mileage reimbursement, as well as volunteer insurance coverage would be great. Some locales may need money for a vehicle, insurance, and gas money, as well. Our volunteers use their own cars. I’m glad that the federal Transportation Department is looking at this issue. Without rides to far away VA facilities, I don’t know what many local veterans would do. Flexibility to meet the needs of various communities is the key. Thank you.

• **47 (solution) LOW COST FARE CARDS** Our transit agency provided low cost fare cards to the local Veterans Group one time. I feel that there should be some monies to allow the Veterans’ Groups to purchase fare cards that could be utilized by Veterans who are now unable to drive.

• **54 (solution) FREE PASS WITH VET ID** Hello All. I was really impressed... an Access A Ride customized London Cab looking vehicle pulled up at the BRONX VA and when the driver got out and opened the door... there was a tricked out, handicapped accessible ride with a ramp and dual sliding doors. That’s the sort of thing we need to see more and more of. More vehicles and more availability. Also I would like to mention... here in NYC, on many occasions I have been given a free pass when drivers noticed my Veterans ID.
61 (solution) FREQUENT TRAVEL POINTS Similar to frequent flyer miles, NEMT providers should offer frequent traveler points that will add up whenever transportation services is used. After so many points you can get free or discounted rides based on your point system. This would actually encourage people to continue using your service and in return you would help them have a better quality of life by getting out. It doesn't necessarily have to be just to a dr. appt., what about lunch-n-learns, grocery store, preventive care events, pharmacy, and other life essential needs promoting health and wellness. You could even partner with places like Publix, La Fitness, etc. to get discounts off purchases depending on your number of points...

63 (solution) REDUCED FARE FOR VETS How about a separate system for veterans and their families/caregivers. If a veteran has been disabled cognitively, physically, or both, then transportation could be provided at 75% of the going rate of regular public transit. These vets and their families could then fully participate in the community, go to appts., events, and be with other like-minded vets, who understand what they have and do go through

64 (solution) REDUCED FARE FOR VETS Please issue a transport pass to all veterans, military personnel and reservists and their families valid in USA. This will be valid in all transport systems. Let them have ride with 50 percent discount. Disabled will have free transport.

72 (solution) VA PAY FOR WC19 CHAIRS The Veterans Administration should pay for and encourage “transit” wheelchairs that comply with ANSI/RESNA standard WC19. This is a voluntary standard that specifies design and performance requirements for wheelchairs that are suitable for use as a seat in motor vehicles. These mobility devices can be more easily secured on public transit vehicles and are safer in the (unlikely) event of a crash.

Collaboration/Coordination

6 (barrier) HARD TO CONNECT WITH VA My experience has been that it is very difficult to find who to talk to within veterans organizations. I have talked to different veterans’ organizations, VSOs, Dept. of VA and VA hospitals and they all have differing views on transportation and what can and needs to be done. There is a movement to create mobility managers and new accessible transportation programs within veteran systems. Two problems with this are that the new transportation is for medical purposes only and vets need so much more than that and there are already well-coordinated systems that veterans can take advantage of if the organizations come to the table. I fear we are just creating more silos instead of working together with what is already being coordinated in an area.

7 (barrier) HARD TO CONNECT WITH VA Our transit system would love to work directly with the closest VA Hospital so that we can get vets there, but they have so many restrictions that it seems they can’t even talk to us. We can’t even call them unless we go through a board member who has a military ID. One local group has a van making trips to the hospital, but it’s not accessible. We’d like to help with that, but we can’t seem to get the communication lines open.
• **8 (barrier) NEED MORE RURAL FUNDING** I have been working on planning and development of rural transportation systems that will serve the entire community for over two decades. Whether it is services for seniors, welfare to work, our veterans or the general public, the issue is FUNDING. We don’t sufficiently fund rural transportation. It is time to stop nibbling around the edges. The problems have been the same for my entire career...programs in silos and inadequate financial resources! Dramatically increase the funding; lower the match requirements; streamline the regulations; to solve a lot of problems for everyone who needs the ride.

• **10-(solution) SHARE RESOURCES** I just read that Regional Valley Transit in Idaho has donated a wheelchair-accessible bus to Parma Senior Center. The Center will use the bus to provide transportation for two primary activities, one of which will be transportation to the Veterans Medical Center.

• **12 (solution) VET MOBILITY MANAGEMENT PILOTS** I am a veteran and a transportation professional. VA has a new transportation initiative and a small staff to work on Veteran’s transportation issues. That group has two problems, legal constraints keep them from using the money that they already spend in innovative ways and very limited new funds to expand existing programs. Why not allow a half dozen pilot projects where the VA and local mobility management stakeholders could determine how local resources and existing VA resources could work together to meet the needs of veterans. If we give these demonstration projects a few dollars and the freedom to get stuff done the results will be dynamic. (funding)

• **14 (solution) BROADEN COALITIONS** In working with the hundreds of communities we reach, the major message we hear is the power of coalitions. With the FTA’s new Veterans Community Living Initiative, we have the opportunity to expand these coalitions to ensure that organizations serving veterans and military families have a seat at the planning table. Ideally, this would also include direct representation by veterans, their families and service members on coordination committees and other coalition building venues.

• **19 (barrier) PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION POST ACCESS** The greatest barrier to providing public transportation to wounded and their families at the national military medical center in San Antonio, is access to the post. Since 2001 VIA’s buses running regular routes have not been allowed on post at Fort Sam Houston. A protocol to make bus service practical would solve a lot of problems. The ball is in DoD’s court.

• **20 (solution) COORDINATE FUNDING** So, funding is limited and seems to be a major issue for all. Right? There are so many ways to get creative with how we spend our budgets and each method looks to increase access to serve the most people while maintaining costs. One opportunity is to identify multiple funding sources, link those funding sources to your users (through either a central database, etc.) then look for opportunities for those funding streams to work together to help share the cost of the transportation but essentially increase the available transportation opportunities for all. Far too often programs compartmentalize their funding or fleet. Those funds can be used to share...
transportation costs with other programs and often times excess capacities can be used within our fleets. In my organization we’ve really looked at how our resources are being used and how we can do more with less. (funding, technology)

- **24 (solution) COORDINATE RESOURCES** In the Chicago area, there are VA medical service locations, which offer vanpool service to and from. There also is a good local public transit - paratransit service - if in some format there was coordination between the government entities, there would be a greater choice, less wait time, and savings for such entities. But the government powers that be are not willing to share or reduce their oversight of transit services.

- **28 (solution) COORDINATE WITH MEDICAL CENTERS** Coordinate a multistage effort to arrange and reduce problems with veterans’ transportation to medical treatment facilities. Medical treatment facilities can work with transit agencies to block specific dates for veterans living in remote access areas that use local transit agencies to provide service. In cases where the two agencies cannot resolve the issue the county Veterans Service Agency should get involved to help resolve the issue and provide oversight until the process runs smoothly.

- **29 (solution) GET VETS ON TRANSIT BOARDS** The public transit agencies should consider having a Veteran from a recognized veteran organization serve as a Board member or as a non-voting Board member in order to get the views of Veterans.

- **31 (solution) COORDINATE MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS** I have found the greater need for Veterans is reliable, affordable, transportation to their medical appointments. Missed appointments and preventive care visits lead to influx emergency care, resulting in increased expenses for everyone. The solution is Coordinated Transportation Scheduling through Emerging Technology. It would be very efficient for medical appointment scheduler personnel to coordinate the transportation needs. (Technology)

- **32 (solution) CONNECT WITH VISNS** To provide continuity for rural veterans for transportation to appointments from local community as well as hospital settings. A shuttle service within the VISN catchment area, assistance with transportation outside of the VISN and transportation within communities during periods or in places local transportation does not operate. shelter pick up/drop off, bus terminals to and from recovery related events or local “Stand Down events”. (rural)

- **37-(solution) LOCATE RESOURCES IN RURAL AREAS** There is now a dialysis treatment center in Mason County, Washington which is used by rural residents who formerly had to travel long distances to other centers for treatment. The new dialysis treatment center is a result of a multi-year effort by a broad community coalition.

- **40 (solution) COORDINATE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS** As lead agency for regional coordination under the banner EasTexConnects, the East Texas Council of Governments worked with partners on an Interconnectivity Day on May 10th to illustrate the benefits of public transportation. The premise was that providers would provide free transportation to those using more than one
mode. To give the day focus, veterans were targeted to make a multimodal trip to the Dallas VA Hospital. A “Basic Training” brochure was produced giving contact information for public transportation providers. With cooperation of the VA and DAV Auxiliary in Tyler, a group of about 20 veterans was taken from Tyler to the VA hospital in Dallas. Our GoBus rural transportation, Amtrak, and DART all participated in the successful “Basic Training” event that showed the group how public transportation can provide independence. After lunch and tour of the VA hospital the group returned to East Texas. Although the group was escorted, participants learned how easy public transportation could be used independently. (education/outreach)

• 41 (barrier) LIABILITY At the NM VA, we are unable to transport Veterans’ Family members due to liability issues. This is frequently a barrier to supporting Veterans when we are able to transport the Veteran to an important medical appt. and yet the family member has to take public transportation. In essence, this implies that we are not supporting Veterans’ family.

• 50 (solution) COORDINATE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH We should look into educating those on Military bases through participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program events. These events help members prior to and after deployments. They serve as a one stop information session for these persons and the family members as well. Including parents, friends, partners, etc. (education/outreach)

• 57 (barrier) COORDINATE DISPATCH AND SCHEDULING One of the challenges to coordinating operations between human service transportation providers and MSO/VSO transportation providers is the lack of easy mechanisms for being able to send trip request or vehicle availability information between providers. Aside from phone calls and faxes, there is no straightforward and secure means to communicate between systems unless perhaps the providers are using the same scheduling & dispatch software. (technology)

• 62 (solution) COORDINATE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES Returning veterans from war need best counsel from community colleges located in their county or nearer community colleges near their county. (education/outreach)

• 75 (barrier) SEPARATE SILOS The silo effect is entrenched in veterans’ services and perpetuated by the “we take care of our own” paradigm. Other community silos believe the VA will step in and take care of the Vets that they see and can’t/won’t serve. Vets services are well insulated at the community level and as a result, there is little to no collaboration. Part of that problem is access to the person/department that can actually do something. The transit industry silo sees Vets as needing medical transportation, and/or that Vets are homeless and want the ride in air conditioning. There is diversity among the Vet populations and VA must admit that. New Vets want integration - don’t want to be treated separately from general pop. Transportation coordination, mobility management,

**Technology**

• 2 (solution) SMARTPHONES The Veteran populations of America, young and old are continuing to access resources and services via their mobile and tablet devices. Yet, many government services
and even local community transportation services go unknown to Veterans and their Families as they move to new neighborhoods or attend Military training (if in the National Guard) in distant, unfamiliar geographic areas. Our idea, selfish as it is, is to develop a central database for transportation options (free and those that cost) for Veterans and their Families and then to serve this information easily and simply to smartphones, which can automatically geolocate a user and show them transportation options “around me.” Many Veterans who cannot afford a personal computer and may need transportation the most are instead opting to purchase a smartphone as their means to connect to the Internet, text messaging, phone lines, and as a status symbol - YET - there are almost zero choices for Veterans in the iPhone and Droid marketplaces, especially transportation related Veteran apps. We would love to discuss this idea in this open forum and determine the ideal mobile phone needs of Veteran transportation services. Many times Veterans cannot get to a job interview or get to their 2nd or 3rd job because of the lack of transportation. The more we can do to empower Vets to know what transportation options are available to them, anywhere, anytime, the more job opportunities will then be open to our country’s civilian soldiers and the tragic unemployment statistics can begin to decrease.

• 13 (solution) ONE CALL The Central Iowa Shelter & Services VISTA Veterans Outreach Project group believes in starting small, then strategically building the program to further enhance its capacity. The Group understands that the plan calls for a one-call/one-click transportation program. In thinking about the idea of “one-call/one-click,” we aim to place the least amount of stress on the client as possible in order for decreased burden in attaining a ride; thereby, the client only having to make one (1) call to access transportation services. Therefore, the Group plans to collaborate with United Way 2-1-1/Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) 5-1-1 in the efforts of connecting people with transportation services. Iowa DOT 5-1-1 would serve as the primary call center for our clients, as well as for the transportation program. A representative at 5-1-1 would then refer and dispatch calls to Central Iowa Shelter & Services for individuals in the qualifying statuses: (1) low-income, (2) persons with disabilities, (3) elderly personas and (4) veterans. Information would be taken by the dispatcher identifying the individuals per qualifying status. Various forms will be used throughout the process flow to document the following: name of client, qualifying status, volunteer availability, services offered, start and end destination, start and end mileage, etc.

• 17 (solution) CALL CENTER I’m a mobility manager in upstate New York. I have a call center when people can get transportation planning assistance. I recently found out that there is a veterans’ support group in our area which has a listserv, connecting veterans and allowing them to help each other. Through this list serve, I was able to find a volunteer to assist a rural caller of mine who needed a ride to the grocery store a few times per month. These kinds of vet networks can be powerful tools for connecting those in need with those who wish to serve.

• 21 (solution) 211 2-1-1 is free a national helpline that connects the community to all social services and health related resources. This system is in place and could be a valuable tool to connect those with transportation needs in any area and link up vets and individuals with disabilities to necessary
resources such as food, supports, shelter services, and basic needs. 2-1-1’s need to be in the conversation when talking about creating a system to support veterans and those in need.

• 23 (solution) ONE CALL It’s good to know there is a wealth of information on the internet about services provided to Veterans. But I have found the challenge in knowing where to look and how to search without being overwhelmed in accessing the information. As a transportation provider, it would be extremely beneficial for there to be a One-source information center for transportation providers to locate transportation services, benefits, programs, training, etc. This information should be uniformed and required for all Transportation providers to keep on hand in their vehicles for either passing out or informational purposes. This will definitely aid in increased quality service in having knowledgeable providers educating their customers/passengers on available services. There should also be more community outreach to assist in getting the word out about these services so people can be better informed and equipped in leveraging these services. When you know better, you do better.

• 27 (solution) ONE CALL In the San Francisco Bay Area veterans travel long distances to access services from VA health care facilities that frequently require traveling through multiple counties and transit agencies. A group of transit agencies from Marin to Monterey County in collaboration with a non-profit transportation provider is working to coordinate information and resources to assist veterans faced with this challenge. The service model includes expanding the information available through an existing one-call/one-click center to include available transportation resources across the entire region as well as providing mobility management support through the collaboration of multiple transportation providers. We have developed multiple online tools to aid this collaboration and enhance the existing one-call/one-click center, including a regional searchable database of applicable services to assist veterans who are trying to travel locally and regionally in order to access services and benefits to support them and their families.

• 69 (solution) INFORMATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY A number of commenters’ have included the need to better use existing transportation systems and the ability to get information quickly through technology. Our existing network, which has over 500 stations across the U.S., has 220 stations located near VA facilities. We believe there are opportunities for veterans to use Amtrak’s system to travel to appointments at these VA facilities and get the best care possible.

Caregivers - Needs

• 15 (need) Transporting a loved one is often one of the biggest issues for caregivers. Whether it is time lost from work, getting information about how to safely and accessibly use their own vehicle or finding community resources with people they trust to provide transportation, there is a great need for more information targeted at caregivers.

• 35 (need) Family, friends and paid care givers play an important role in supporting veterans and wounded warriors - and transportation is a service provided by many caregivers. Is anyone familiar with communities supporting caregivers that provide transportation? what are they doing to support these unsung heroes?
• **38 (need)** What happens in case of emergencies - for instance, the need to accompany or visit a family member to the hospital? Or to go to a funeral? How do you deal with that if you have trouble with transportation in your daily life?

**Mobility Management & Travel Training**

• **9 (need) TRAVEL TRAINING** Many people learn to use public transportation with the assistance of a travel trainer. What information to travel trainers need to know to better service members of the military community and their families?

**Volunteer Driver Programs**

• **8 (solution) VETERAN BUDDIES** Veteran Buddies (being used already by some transit agencies) can be volunteers willing to be “travel trainers to Vets not accustom to using public transit. The Veteran Buddies can be trained by the transit agencies on how to perform such duties ... compensation can be a transit uniform; special recognition, etc.

• **13 (solution) VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAMS** The initiation of a volunteer transportation program was brought about with this goal in mind: transport Polk County residents to any place, at any time and wherever the destination the individual may need to go. The Central Iowa Shelter & Services VISTA Veterans Outreach Project group factored improved quality of life rides as a major determinant in our decision making processes. By providing a volunteer transportation service to groups such as elderly persons, persons with disabilities and to low-income individuals and homeless individuals as well as veterans, there lies a sense of hope that those individuals can, too, access basic needs and participate in activities of daily living. A volunteer transportation program to the Polk County community will aim to relieve stress for hundreds, if not thousands, of Polk County residents searching for an opportunity to be self-sufficient and practice one’s independence. In thinking about the Polk County’s transportation needs and the main objective of improving quality of life for its residents, the CISS VISTA VOP group developed a strategy that aims to fill transportation gaps in the area.
Appendix II – Tag Cloud

The *cloud* of ideas and comments show the major *tags*, or words, that represent major themes and perspectives:
Appendix III - Outreach

Outreach through Email & Websites

Beginning in April 2012, VetsFirst sent information, including three blast emails about the dialogue, to key stakeholders. The first blast was sent on April 28, the second on May 8, and the third on May 31. The open rates for these three blasts were each over 30%. These blast emails were also distributed by the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), the National Military and Veterans Alliance, and The Military Coalition to their member organizations. The audience for the emails was all of the major veterans and military organizations, including The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and Military Officers Association of America. Other recipients were organizations that work with veterans, including the National Council on Independent Living and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

The announcement was also posted on National Veterans Technical Assistance Project listserv, which led to numerous visitor comments. Also through our outreach efforts, the Association of Travel Instruction added a link to its website. We also provided the information to selected agency contacts who work with veterans, including staff with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, the U.S. Department of Defense’s Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Through the VA Secretary’s Veterans Service Organization liaison, the information was disseminated through an announcement on May 4. Through telephone, individual email or personal contacts with representatives for several veterans and military service organizations, we sought participation and support from the Vietnam Veterans of America, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans, and Student Veterans of America.

Outreach through Announcements at Meetings & Conferences

Outreach efforts also included announcements at veteran-related meetings. On March 30, we announced the dialogue during a CCD Veterans and Military Families Task Force forum concerning employment for disabled veterans. On April 23, we announced the dialogue to members of the National Military and Veterans Alliance. On May 5-10 at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Bus & Paratransit Conference and on May 20-25 at the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) EXPO, we provided a laptop at our information booth with a link to the dialogue website and, in several program sessions, distributed specially designed post cards announcing the dialogue. Also on May10, we discussed the dialogue at the monthly meeting for the CCD Veterans and Military Families Task Force. On May 11, we announced the dialogue to the Veteran’s Committee of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies during a veterans’ service organization panel. On May 22, we announced the dialogue and provided postcards about the dialogue to member organizations of the Veterans Health Council.
Outreach through Social Media

Social media was also used to promote the veterans' transportation dialogue. The national online dialogue for veterans' transportation website was the first dialogue which included a direct social media component for dialogue participants to share what they were reading to their networks on Facebook and Twitter through “likes” or “Tweets.” Overall, the dialogue generated 86 likes on Facebook and 52 Tweets on Twitter. The second most popular idea—“Centralizing Transportation Options via Smartphone Access”—also generated the most likes on Facebook. Additionally, organizations and individuals used social media sites—Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs—as part of their outreach efforts, including:

- A welcome video from Sec. LaHood
- Blog articles from the White House’s Joining Forces initiative, Sec. LaHood, and ESPA
- Postings on social media sites, including Facebook and Twitter, from the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy
- A video message of support from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development General Deputy Assistant Secretary Brian Greene
- Articles in The Washington Post, Metro Magazine and other industry publications that were promoted through their respective social media sites
- Other postings on Facebook and Twitter by federal, state and local officials and agencies

In addition, VetsFirst posted four blogs on our organization’s website. The first blog posting, titled, “The Origin of Accessible Public Transportation in New York City,” was published online on May 1. The second blog posting, titled, “Help Improve Access to Transportation for Disabled Vets,” was published online on May 9. The third blog posting, titled, “Accessible Public Transportation in New York City Pre-ADA,” was published online on May 9. The fourth blog posting, titled, “Accessible Transportation Makes Business/Personal Travel Easier for Mobility-Disabled Vets,” was published online on June 4. VetsFirst also used Facebook and Twitter to promote participation in the dialogue. Partnering with VetsFirst and their robust efforts greatly contributed to the success of the dialogue.

One dialogue participant’s comment on the potential use of social media as a communications tool for reaching veterans to connect them to services was, “My 20-something brother is in the Army and has a huge network of friends using Facebook. Given the camaraderie and existing support within the military network, it seems that modern social networks would be a powerful tool for linking veterans to services, finding volunteers, etc.”
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