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Manual for Organizing Transit Riders Features Creative Community Victories

Washington, DC—Good Jobs First today published a grassroots organizing manual for riders of public transportation seeking to preserve and improve transit service.

“Organizing Transit Riders: A How-To Manual” is a 64-page resource guide that includes six case studies of successful transit-funding campaigns plus interviews with the nation’s two oldest transit advocacy groups, the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign in New York and the Bus Riders Union in Los Angeles.

The manual was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and is freely available at www.goodjobsfirst.org.

“This manual draws upon two community-labor ‘boot camps’ we staged with the Amalgamated Transit Union,” said Greg LeRoy, director of Good Jobs First and primary author of the manual. “In recruiting to the boot camps, we found a motley rainbow of community groups organizing transit riders. Most had never met before and they shared terrific stories.”

“We applaud Good Jobs First for issuing this manual,” said Lawrence Hanley, International President of the Amalgamated Transit Union, the nation’s largest union of transit workers. “Transit riders deserve a greater voice and rider organizing is critical to stemming the national tide of service cuts and fare hikes that are actually tax hikes on the working poor.”

The manual’s case studies feature exciting campaigns in the Twin Cities and Denver metro areas, Spokane and King County in Washington state, St. Louis County, and Toronto, Canada. The case studies are written by the community organizers who orchestrated the campaigns. The manual also includes an annotated set of links to other campaign resources, a series of constituency-recruitment checklists, a summary of common elements of successful campaigns, and a directory of every known grassroots group organizing transit riders in the U.S.

Good Jobs First is a non-profit, non-partisan resource center promoting accountability in economic development and smart growth for working families. It has published studies for 11 years looking at economic development subsidies and the geographic sprawl of jobs, job access via transit, organized labor’s role in smart growth, and transit-oriented development.