

TIPS

FOR A
SUCCESSFUL
PROJECT

MATCHING FUNDS

All projects are required to have a match to receive federal Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom (NF) funds. A travel training project is considered "mobility management," and therefore requires a 20% match. Matching funds can consist of contributions from another federal agency, such as US Department of Health and Human Services, US Department of Veterans Affairs, etc. (Federal Department of Transportation funds cannot be used as match.) Other eligible match sources include foundation grants, corporate support, or contributions from private donors. State, county, or city funds are eligible sources of match. You might use your own general funds as a match for operations or buy materials specifically for this project, such as equipment, pre-paid transit tickets, or training materials

PLANNING AHEAD

As you prepare your grant application, you will need to anticipate the details of implementation. This preparation will ensure that you have budgeted accurately:

Project Staffing

Will you need to hire more staff? If so, are they likely to be already trained for the tasks in the project, or will you need to build in training before the project starts up?

Managing the Grant

Is your agency prepared to provide adequate project oversight for the duration of the grant? If you will use existing staff, how do you intend to keep the bookkeeping and materials separate from current projects in order to have clear accountability for the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) grant? This accountability may include keeping track of volunteer or in-kind hours to meet the local match. Do you have adequate resources to track customer participation, prepare quarterly progress reports, and manage the financial aspects of the grant? Applications are required to provide milestones for project development, project implementation and project evaluation. Quarterly reports will be required and should include details such as the number of people trained in a quarter, number of trips taken, number of classes held, etc. and other quantitative and/or qualitative information that provides a clear picture of the project's progress.

Partnerships

What role will partner organizations play? How will you coordinate with them? If they will play a significant role, how will potential disputes over implementation be addressed?

Identifying Need

What methodology will you use to estimate the number of participants who will be served by your grant? Can you justify that the number is realistic, not only to the TPB but to partner organizations, board members and others?

Selecting Participants

What organizations can help you find the right type of participant and have those organizations expressed willingness to help? If too many people want your service, what criteria will you use to limit the number? If not enough sign up to participate, what outreach methods will you employ to meet the number specified in your grant application?

Insurance and Liability

Does your project add potential new liabilities that your insurance doesn't cover? For example, if you will be escorting people, are there "trip and fall" hazards that will bring new exposure?

Logistics

Do you have enough space or will you need to procure more? If your project is aimed at people with disability aids or service animals will the space be large enough?

Flexibility

Often times, conditions can change between the process and plans described in the application and those present during implementation. Similarly, changes can occur over the two years for which you have budgeted. Have you built in flexibility to adjust the project as unforeseen changes arise?

EVALUATION

In order to write a compelling the grant application, you will need to gather data to demonstrate the need for your project—how many people will be served and on what basis you have made this estimate. After you have been awarded the grant, you may wish to gather further data as a baseline against which the success of your project will be measured. Your budget should reflect the time and resources needed to obtain additional data, if needed.

Dedicated staff time will be needed to track the project milestones you have indicated in your grant application. You should set up benchmark dates during the project to check on how you are doing in meeting the milestones and to develop a strategy for adjustments in the project if you are falling behind. You will be required to report your progress to the Transportation Planning Board on an annual basis, so tracking the performance of the project throughout its duration will be very helpful in providing a full picture of the impact of your project.

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:

Alternative formats of this publication are available upon request.
Phone (202) 962-3300 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD).
Email: accommodations@mwkog.org.
Please allow seven working days for preparation of the material.

CONTACT INFO:

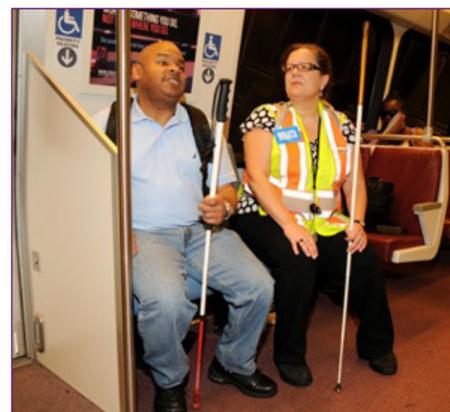
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NATIONAL CAPITAL
REGION TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING BOARD

NEW FREEDOM
PROJECT TEMPLATE

Travel Training

Developing a travel training program



If your agency or organization is considering applying for a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Freedom grant to conduct travel training, this brochure will provide you with tips for preparing your application, and steps you should be aware of in setting up such a program. More information about the application process is available through the TPB's website at: www.tpbcoordination.org.

Travel training educates people who are unfamiliar with public transportation on how to use it, and has multiple benefits for both the persons receiving the training, and for the larger society. Travel training: Many people can benefit from travel training, including senior citizens who have given up driving; people with physical disabilities; low-income residents who cannot afford a car; deaf or blind individuals who cannot see signage or hear announcements; people with developmental disabilities; and immigrants or illiterate individuals who cannot read or understand English. Some transit agencies have also trained people who qualify for dial-a-ride service on how to ride public transit to reduce more expensive paratransit costs.

Here are some benefits that your agency could use in writing the grant application:

- Promotes independence, self-reliance and mobility for persons who may not have previously used public transportation
- Assists persons with disabilities to be mainstreamed into society and to use the same public transportation services as other members of the community
- Allows for better and more flexible access to jobs, services, family visits, shopping and entertainment
- Results in lower transportation costs to the individual than taxis, paratransit fares, or auto expenses
- Provides respite for family and caregivers, who may previously have been responsible to provide transportation
- Ensures that the public investment made in a fully accessible transit infrastructure is well utilized
- May result in significant cost savings to public transit operators by reducing their paratransit obligation.
- Often results in enhancing collaborative relationships between a local public transit agency and disability organizations

Different levels of travel training may be tailored to the skills of the individuals being served.

Travel Training

Keys to Success

The following “keys to success” are based on lessons learned by sponsors of other travel training programs.

- Design and develop a program that is appropriate for the target population. For example, a curriculum designed for blind or visually impaired people will specifically address their travel needs, which are different from those experienced by persons with developmental disabilities.
- Make use of existing resources, often available at no charge, that can help you develop the most appropriate training model for your customers. Easter Seals Project ACTION is an excellent resource: http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA_homepage
- Develop and cultivate a recruitment strategy to ensure our agency has enough qualified travel trainers. In some cases, existing staff may be trained to carry out these activities; or, your agency may need to hire new personnel. Alternatively, the training may be contracted out to a third party or organization (such as a local Center for Independent Living) that specializes in providing the training.
- Build in an element to provide customer follow-up after the initial training. This step will confirm whether or not the training was successful by monitoring the customers’ travel patterns after the training is completed.
- Provide additional training, if needed. Some people may need a refresher course, or may need to be re-trained if their travel routines or patterns have changed.
- Provide customers with up-to-date information on changes in fares, routes, providers, etc.

Potential Partners

- Agencies serving the target population, such as schools, senior centers and retirement communities, county human service departments, disability organizations
- Corporate and charitable foundations
- Transit operators

Putting Together a Budget

It is important to remember that all projects are required to have a local match to receive federal Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom (NF) funds. The FTA considers travel training a mobility management project, so only a 20% match is required. For example, if your total project cost is estimated at \$100,000, you must find \$20,000 in non-transportation federal sources or other local sources to match the federal grant. See “Tips for Success” on the

LOCAL TRAVEL TRAINING PROJECTS

When planning a travel training program, potential sponsors should consider contacting successful projects to learn more about how to set up, implement and evaluate a travel training program. Three local projects are highlighted below.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)—received a 2009 JARC grant of \$484,204 and a New Freedom (NF) grant of \$484,203. Working in partnership with Centers for Independent Living (CIL) in three regions, this program is providing training for 600 people with significant disabilities over a two-year period to use Metro buses and trains. Three hundred are low-income people with disabilities who are being trained through JARC funds to travel to employment activities. The remaining 300 are being trained under NF funds. Each person will receive 32 hours of individualized training in four-hour sessions, and a \$50 fare card upon completion of the training as an incentive to continue using public transit. In addition, CIL staff will participate in Train the Travel Trainers Workshops. *Contact: 202-962-1125.*

Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind—received a 2009 New Freedom grant of \$259,000. Orientation and Mobility Specialists are teaching 200 blind and visually impaired persons the correct techniques for accessing

various modes of public transportation. The Specialists will prepare and teach the use of tactile, Braille and auditory maps and teach clients how to travel in various weather conditions. Clients will be assisted in obtaining and using alternatives to cane travel, including guide dogs, electronic and optical aids. *Contact: 202-454-6400.*

Jewish Council for the Aging—received a 2007 New Freedom grant of \$82,560. This project experienced a change in its implementation. As originally planned, a professional trainer would train 30 healthy seniors—10 at each of three different housing sites. As partners, staff at the housing sites would select the participants and provide classroom space. Two three-hour group sessions at each site, followed by two individually planned and executed trips for each senior, were to prepare participants to live more independently. Trained volunteers were to follow up with travel planning for 6-10 months after the conclusion of the program. As it turned out, more people preferred to train in groups, rather than alone. Ultimately, the training became three-hour group sessions held on two separate days. The first day included two hours of instruction, lunch and breaks. On the second day participants took a field trip to purchase Senior SmarTrip cards, go to a Metro station, and add money to the card. To meet the needs of additional interested seniors, the curriculum was also expanded to include those with limited English speaking ability. Instead of the 30 participants initially planned for, the project trained 250 older adults. *Contact: 301-255-4207.*



Different levels of travel training may be tailored to the skills of the individuals being served. For example, a group may participate in classroom activities, such as how to find out what public transit services are available in their neighborhood; how to read paper bus and train maps and schedules; how to find arrival and departure times on the internet; and how to plan a trip, including transfers. A trainer can then take the group on one or more sample trips, where they can practice skills such as paying fares, boarding, identifying and requesting a stop, and transferring.

Some people need more individual attention than what is provided through classroom training. One-on-one training may be appropriate for persons with developmental disabilities, for example. Many people can be trained to take a specific trip to and from home and a facility or job site. Another option is a buddy system, in which a professional trains volunteers, who then make trips with the novice rider until the rider is confident using public transit independently.

Ideally, the local transit agency should be involved with and participate in travel training because:

- Operators will know what to expect, particularly when groups of riders will be boarding for the first time.
- A transit agency representative could be invited to be a guest speaker in a classroom setting.
- Transit agencies can also give tips to trainers about their particular services and may provide discounted tickets for the training exercises.

following page for examples of possible sources for the match funding. The FTA prohibits the use of JARC and New Freedom funds to purchase transit fares but the match funding can be used for this purpose (and the purchase of \$5.00 Smartrip card (without fare loaded on) is eligible for JARC and New Freedom funds.

This information here is intended to help your agency think through putting together a budget for the grant application. The overall cost of the program will depend on how many people are being trained and what type of training will be given: one-on-one, small groups or classroom style. You can contact TPB staff about specific program expenses. Categories of expenses, and approximate amounts, are shown here, which are intended to illustrate the types of expenses needed to be considered when starting a travel training project. For staff positions such as a project manager, who may have only a portion of their salaries dedicated to this project, only the value of the percent of time which will be spent on the project needs to be included in the budget. Also keep in mind that the TPB grant application budget is for a 2-year period (applicants can apply for only one year). The “Mobility Management” section of the budget table in the application should be used.

Budget Category	Percent or Range of Total Cost
Administration and Project Management	Approximately 10% to 15% of total budget
Marketing and Outreach	A robust marketing effort should be 25% of the total budget
Data Collection and Program Evaluation	It is recommended that applicants dedicate 10% to 20% of the total budget to evaluation.
Program Items:	
Travel Trainer Personnel	In previous grants, travel training staffing costs salaries ranged from \$xxk to \$xxk per year or \$xx to \$xx per hour
Volunteers’ mileage	
Rent & utilities for classroom space	
Teaching materials	
Refreshments for Participants	
Interpreters or Assisted Listening Devices	