



NATIONAL AGING AND DISABILITY TRANSPORTATION CENTER

2021 FTA Section 5310 Compendium

Travel Training Instruction using FTA Section 5310

Introduction

Across the country, transportation agencies are approaching services in unique ways, one of these methods of delivery is Travel Training. This service is often developed by a Mobility Manager or operational staff and used as an educational tool to assist passengers individually or group. This type of service is an eligible expense under FTA Section 5310, and can support staff time, marketing efforts, bus fare or whatever the program might need to assist in training riders. The primary focus of Travel Training is to implement a training program or curriculum to assist riders, including older adults and persons with disabilities, with the end goal being that your riders can travel independently within your community.

In a Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP, Report 168), [Travel Training for Older Adults](#), it was indicated that the main reason for not riding the bus was an unfamiliarity with public transportation or available options, and a general lack of confidence in using its services. Navigating transportation can be intimidating to new customers, especially for the aging and disability community. Riders may have trouble understanding and navigating system route maps and schedules and may be overwhelmed by transit options – this is where adopting a formal Travel Training program can be beneficial for your riders.

There are several opportunities to assist transit staff in the implementation of a Travel Training program, one of the primary options is the [Certified Travel Training Instructor](#) program managed by Easterseals Project Action Consulting. This is a 60-credit hour course, to be completed within 2 years, and certified through the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida. Skills developed during this coursework include knowledge of human development and behavior, an understanding of transportation systems and services, and the

ability to teach the concepts of interaction with both the natural and built environment along paths of travel. As a way to continue learning and gain additional resources, Travel Trainers can become members of the [Association of Travel Instruction](#) (ATI), as a way to connect with their peers across the country and further develop their skills.

Local Examples

GoDakota, Dakota County, Minnesota

Dakota County has a population of about 425,000 and situated within the Twin Cities Metropolitan area of Minnesota and maintains a mixture of urban, suburban and rural. Between 1990 and 2000, the county area grew by nearly 30 percent and continues to expand and grow outward from the urban core of Minneapolis and St. Paul into suburban cities and townships. In 2014, a Human Service Transportation Study determined there were plenty of options for transportation, however, each of those options came with different eligibility criteria, service areas or hours of operation.



[GoDakota](#) was developed as a group of stakeholders dedicated to reducing transportation barriers to individuals with disabilities and older adults in Dakota County utilizing mobility management strategies. The ultimate goal of GoDakota is that transportation would no longer be a barrier to people with disabilities and older adults and to educate the public about available transportation services.

In 2015, GoDakota hired dedicated staff to manage the Travel Training program to promote independence by helping riders understand the available transportation options and teach them how to navigate where they need to go. Travel Training works one-on-one or in a group setting, allowing GoDakota to assess a riders' ability to navigate the transit system, then design a curriculum for a rider to understand exactly how to travel from one location to another.



Photo Credit: GoDakota

Travel Training allows riders to independently navigate to work, school, medical or social outings, eliminating the need for a reliance on friends or family.

In 2018, within its first year of travel training, 45 individuals and 957 groups successfully completed travel training through GoDakota. During the pandemic in 2020, however, training continued but dropped to about 6 individuals, proving this type of service is greatly needed, even though at reduced levels.

A partnership with Lyft was recently developed for an additional on-demand option, allowing riders to travel quickly around the metro. This service is currently operating for about \$15 per trip and has offered over 750 rides to-date. GoDakota has incorporated Lyft as part of their travel training curriculum, adding in the need for cell phone navigation for using the Lyft application.

As a way to provide access to all available services within Dakota County and the Twin Cities Metro Area, each option has been incorporated into the online [Transportation Finder](#) using a Google Maps platform, and includes fixed route, on-demand, volunteer driver options, non-emergency transportation, ADA Complementary Paratransit and Lyft. This free service allows users to plan their trip from the comfort of their home and travel throughout the community independently.

[TripLink, New Hampshire](#)

[TripLink](#) is Southeastern New Hampshire's regional transportation call center, providing information and referrals, and takes trip requests on behalf of COAST, Ready Rides, Rockingham Nutrition & Meals on Wheels, and the Community Rides non-emergency medical transportation service. TripLink is funded through the work of the Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT), and represents 38 towns and cities within the region, and incorporating all of the available information into the TripLink call center. Given the vast amount of information and services available, Travel Training was developed at [COAST](#) (Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation) as another way to assist riders navigate the various options within



TripLink's service area. Riders have the ability to access TripLink on their own, filling out applicable information and schedule their trip directly through the website. The trip request is then processed and assigned to an appropriate transit provider for that trip. The mobility manager has the ability to coach existing and new riders through the application process and schedule the rider's initial trip, as well as assisting with on-board navigation to where they need to go.

[Denver Regional Mobility & Access Council, Denver, Colorado](#)

Denver Regional Mobility & Access Council (DRMAC), serves as the Regional Coordinating Council for the Denver Colorado metropolitan region, with a focus on older adults and people with disabilities capability to go where they need and want to go safely, efficiently and within budget. The governing Board of Directors advises the [Local Coordinating Councils](#) and participate in various regional work groups, task forces and committees to enhance the experience and needs of the transit dependent population.

To assist in education and informing new and existing riders, DRMAC has developed the [Getting There Travel Training](#) program to guide customers around the metro area. Initial training is offered through four online modules and ends with a ‘graduation trip’ as a group to a desired location. Riders have the ability to learn at their own pace, or with a Travel Trainer, about bus safety, locating a bus or train, purchasing fares and planning their trip.



Summary

Travel Training Instruction can be a method to enhance the knowledge and skills of the aging community, persons with disabilities, and the public, allowing riders to travel safely and independently throughout their service area. Programs developed by the mobility manager or travel trainer are eligible under the FTA Section 5310 program, as a way to enhance services for the aging and disability community, but remain open to general riders, too. Public transportation can be challenging for those who have not ridden a bus in their lifetime, often relying on friends or family for a ride to their vital medical appointments, essential trips, grocery shopping or social outing. Travel Training can enhance a rider’s confidence in riding on their own and broadening their ability to access the services they need independently.

References

Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP, Report 168), *Travel Training for Older Adults*
<https://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/171323.aspx>

Certified Travel Training Instructor (CTTI)
<https://www.projectaction.com/certification-programs/travel-trainer-certification/>

Association of Travel Instruction (ATI)
<https://www.travelinstruction.org/about-us>

GoDakota
<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Transportation/GettingAround/Pages/default.aspx>

GoDakota, Transportation Finder
<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=6db787033e92477f83ea6a9ca03ff2bc&extent=-10401507.9608%2C5561925.5642%2C-10322930.6957%2C5611456.7586%2C102100>

TripLink, [TripLink](#)

Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation, [COAST](#)

Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC)
<https://drmac-co.org/>