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## Technical Assistance and Funding Opportunities for Travel Instruction Programs in Massachusetts

This document provides an overview of technical assistance, peer support, professional development, and funding opportunities available in Massachusetts to support the development, implementation, expansion, and improvement of travel instruction programs. Travel instruction is the professional activity of teaching individuals with disabilities and seniors the skills and knowledge they need to ride public transportation independently and safely.

### Customized Technical Assistance

Transit agencies and human service agencies looking to start a new travel instruction program, expand or improve an existing program can access free technical assistance from MassMobility staff. We can conduct research and connect you with local and national sources to help find answers to your questions. We can also assist with the process of designing your program.

### Peer Support

MassMobility facilitates the Massachusetts Travel Instruction Network (MATIN), a voluntary network of travel trainers and individuals working on launching travel instruction programs in Massachusetts. The network has an email discussion group and quarterly in-person meetings. Network members generously support newer programs by offering shadowing opportunities so that new travel trainers can watch experienced travel trainers in action. They also share their forms so that new programs do not have to reinvent the wheel, and provide other assistance on an as needed basis.

### Professional Development

MATIN's in-person meetings often involve presentations on key topics. Past presentations included tips on working with trainees with Autism Spectrum Disease and individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Network members can suggest topics of interest and MassMobility finds presenters to provide these continuing education sessions.

MassDOT has funded a series of workshops conducted by the Kennedy Center of Connecticut. If you are interested in attending a three-day workshop covering an introduction to key components of travel training programs or a two-day intermediate-level workshop, please contact MassMobility to learn about upcoming opportunities.



## **Funding**

Travel instruction programs can apply for federal funding from MassDOT through the Community Transit Grant Program. MassDOT prioritizes funding for programs serving regions that do not already have travel instruction services.

- Travel instruction is an eligible capital expense under 49 U.S.C. Section 5310. MassDOT makes Sec. 5310 funds available to eligible applicants including transit authorities, human service agencies, and non-profit organizations through an annual competitive application process. Applicants can cover 80 percent of their costs from the grant and must provide a local match for the remaining 20 percent.

Visit [www.massdot.state.ma.us/transit/CommunityTransitGrantProgram.aspx](http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/transit/CommunityTransitGrantProgram.aspx) for more information.

Since MassDOT's funding is limited, agencies are encouraged to use general funds and to think creatively about additional sources of funding to support their travel instruction services.

## **USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION**

Please contact [rachel.fichtenbaum@state.ma.us](mailto:rachel.fichtenbaum@state.ma.us) for information about travel instruction or technical assistance, and contact [aniko.laszlo@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:aniko.laszlo@dot.state.ma.us) for additional information about funding.

For additional resources on travel instruction, please visit <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/transit/MobilityManagementCenter/Resources/TravellInstruction.aspx>.

Reference: Rachel Fichtenbaum. (2016) *Technical Assistance and Funding Opportunities for Travel Instruction Programs in Massachusetts*. Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Human Service Transportation Office, Quincy, MA