

2016 Massachusetts Community Transportation Coordination Conference

Travel Instruction: Group Sessions and Bus Demo

Presenters

- Tess Sebastian, Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA)
- Anna Koterski, WRTA

Facilitator

- Rachel Fichtenbaum, MassMobility

Introduction – Rachel

- Travel instruction is the professional activity of teaching a senior, person with a disability, or someone else the skills and knowledge they need to ride public transit independently and safely
- Last year at the conference we had a panel focusing on individualized travel training, where a trainer works with one trainee to master all the skills they need to ride transit successfully. This could include street crossing, interacting appropriately with other passengers, knowing what to do when you're lost, recognizing landmarks, etc. Last year we heard from a transit authority, a nonprofit, and a school teacher about how they provide travel training. This year, Tess and Anna from the WRTA offered to present on their group orientations for immigrants, refugees, and people with limited English.
- For more information on travel instruction, please join the Massachusetts Travel Instruction Network. Facilitated by MassMobility, this network is an opportunity for anyone who provides travel instruction or wishes to start a program to connect with peers to share successful strategies and brainstorm solutions to common challenges.

Presentation – Tess

- WRTA's group orientations mainly serve seniors and people with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- Less is more! Don't have too many slides. Stay flexible
- Be aware of cultural differences

Demo on Out-of-Service WRTA Bus

- Attendees took a brief field trip to an out-of-service WRTA bus in the parking lot
- Tess, Anna, and the bus driver demonstrated accessibility features and showed how to secure a wheelchair
- They teach trainees where to find the bus number so trainees can report any lost items and provide customer feedback
- During orientation sessions, WRTA staff take trainees on the WRTA Route 80, which does a short loop around downtown Worcester

Q&A

- Attendees asked about performance measures. One attendee suggested doing pre and post surveys, but Tess pointed out that language barriers can be a barrier to surveys.