Mobility Management

Mobility management is an innovative approach for managing and delivering coordinated transportation services to customers, including older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. Mobility management focuses on meeting individual customer needs through a wide range of transportation options and service providers. It also focuses on coordinating these services and providers to achieve a more efficient transportation service delivery system.

Mobility managers serve as policy coordinators, operations service brokers, and customer travel navigators. As policy coordinators, mobility managers help communities develop coordination plans, programs, and policies, and build local partnerships. They also work to promote land-use policies that favor transit-oriented development, public transportation, and pedestrian access. As brokers, they coordinate transportation services among all customer groups, service providers, and funding agencies. And, as travel navigators, they work with human service agencies and/or workforce centers that coordinate the travel and trip planning needs of individuals who receive human service program assistance.

Mobility management is an eligible capital expense under most U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs (49 U.S.C. 5307, 5310 , 5311, 5318, and Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act Section 3006(b)). This means FTA can fund 80 percent of mobility management expenses. Federal Transit Law also affords the option to use non-DOT transportation funding or service contracts to meet matching requirements. Federal Transit Law (49 U.S. Code § 5302) defines mobility management as a capital project "consisting of short-range planning and management activities and projects for improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers carried out by a recipient or subrecipient through an agreement entered into with a person, including a governmental entity, under this chapter (other than section 5309); but excluding operating public transportation services."

Mobility management activities eligible for funding include:

- ☐ Operating transportation brokerages to coordinate service providers, funding resources, and customer needs;
- ☐ Coordinating transportation services for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes;
- ☐ Supporting local partnerships that coordinate transportation services;
- ☐ Staffing for the development and implementation of coordination plans;
- ☐ Providing travel training and trip planning activities for customers;
- ☐ Developing and operating traveler call centers to coordinate travel information, manage eligibility requirements, and arrange customer travel; and
- ☐ Planning and implementing the acquisition and purchase of intelligent transportation technologies to operate a coordinated system.

The mobility management approach differs from traditional transit services in several ways:

- Mobility management tries to better serve individuals and the community. Traditional transit service planning aggregates demand on centralized, highly traveled routes of a transit system.
- Mobility management focuses on diversity of travel options, services, and modes to reach a wide range of customers versus traditional transit systems that are built on regional service coverage.
- Mobility management uses multiple transportation providers to offer the most efficient service to individuals - traditional transit agencies typically use a single operator to deliver all services.
- Mobility management underscores the importance of service advocacy to improve public transportation management and delivery. A mobility manager acts as a travel agent/service coordinator to seek the most effective means for meeting an individual's transportation needs. Transit agencies generally focus on the direct provision of services.

Getting Started

Meeting the transportation needs of the community is no easy task, but it can be done if transportation providers, human services agencies, and the community work together to plan and implement services. Mobility management involves these key steps:

- [ ] Developing an inventory of available services;
- [ ] Identifying customer needs;
- [ ] Developing strategies to meet needs;
- [ ] Coordinating financial and other resources;
- [ ] Improving coordination through transportation brokerage systems;
- [ ] Training staff and volunteers;
- [ ] Promoting the use of innovative technologies, services, and other methods to improve customer service and coordination; and
- [ ] Developing customer information and trip planning systems.

Technology

The mobility management approach uses Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies to make individualized service possible. ITS includes a broad range of communications, monitoring, scheduling, and dispatching technologies. These technologies can facilitate coordination, enhance safety, improve information sharing, optimize transportation routes, and reduce wait times, an important consideration for older adults and people with disabilities. The following ITS technologies can be used to manage the operational side of mobility management strategies:

- [ ] Computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and automatic vehicle location (AVL) systems can facilitate coordination of passenger transfers between vehicles or transit systems, reroute vehicles to meet passenger needs, and optimize transportation route; it can also be used to take reservations and schedule trips.
- [ ] AVL systems provide real-time location of vehicles equipped with a global positioning system (GPS). The GPS satellite transmits vehicle location information to the transit center. AVL, when combined with other technologies, optimizes dispatching, allows each vehicle to service more passengers, monitors on-time performance, and provides time-sensitive information to customers.
- [ ] Data management systems gather, manage, report, and store data relating to schedules, trips, billing, and customer information.
- [ ] Electronic fare payment and collection systems enable customers to use a variety of media to pay for transit trips and simplify fare collection for transit providers.
- [ ] In-vehicle diagnostics systems monitor the condition of transit vehicles. Real-time information can be passed on to the dispatch center via a radio data connection between the transit vehicle and central control. The system includes software that manages vehicle and parts maintenance records.

Recognizing the important contributions that ITS technologies can make to improving mobility and access, the USDOT launched the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) initiative, Mobility Services for All Americans (MSAA) in 2005. MSAA complements the CCAM effort, which brings federal agencies together to enhance transportation access and minimize duplication of services. MSAA enhances mobility for transportation disadvantaged populations by applying technological solutions to advance human service transportation, more information:
https://www.its.dot.gov/research_archives/msaa/index.htm

Resources

FTA-Funded National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM): www.nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org
Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM): www.transit.dot.gov/ccam/about

August 2018