Successful Local Transportation Coordination Case Studies
Coordination Strategy: Offer customer travel training
Metro Transit Travel Training

Background
Metro Transit’s travel training program utilizes two customer advocates to provide riding assistance to clients traveling on Metro Transit trains or buses. These customer advocates also speak to groups and do other marketing activities to promote Metro Transit ridership. The program serves anyone interested in learning more about riding Metro Transit to get to any type of destination.

Problem/Opportunity
In 1994, Metro Transit’s general manager advocated for a new position called a customer advocate. Originally, these customer advocates helped with customer service issues, but over time these customer advocate positions have changed to be more proactive in helping people overcome barriers to riding and to market transit riding.

Service Area
- Serves Twin Cities metro area
- Clients are anyone interested in learning more about riding Metro Transit—especially school-aged children, older adults, and riders with disabilities

Financial
- 2010 budget: Part of customer relations budget of approximately $1 million
- As part of Metro Transit, program funding comes from state and federal funds and the Metropolitan Council

Operational Characteristics
- Created in 1994
- Staffed by two full-time employees

Results
- 2010: 862 group presentations, over 20,000 participants
- 2010: Individual trainings for 20 people

Lessons Learned
- Coordinated trainings and schedules

Solution
The customer advocates have worked to help people become more aware of the services Metro Transit provides, to dispel fears or anxieties potential riders may have about riding, and to market transit riding to the general public.

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Results/Benefits
In 2010, the customer advocates gave 862 presentations with over 20,000 people in total attendance. In that same year, customer advocates had 20 one-on-one travel trainings.

Challenges/Lessons Learned
The travel training program has been busy, and scheduling group and individual trainings with the current two customer advocates has been a challenge.

Future Direction
Metro Transit plans to continue this program in the future. They have also started handing out coupons to riders who attend trainings and will track the use of the coupons as a means of evaluating the program’s effect on ridership.