



Travel Coaching

Program Manual

March 2015

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ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

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Photo Source: MARTA

TRAVEL COACHING

INTRODUCTION

Organization

This manual provides:

- Background on the Travel Coaching program
- Introduction to the functions the Travel Coach will be performing
- Step-by-step procedures and forms for the Travel Coaches as they perform these functions
- Customer Evaluation

Background on Travel Coaching

What is Travel Coaching?

Travel Coaching uses a classroom setting to review the process of trip discovery, trip planning, and reserving a trip, and to assess the person's comfort level and ability to take the trip. By talking through the steps of the trip, the Travel Coach can pinpoint areas of discomfort and answer questions. Travel Coaching occurs entirely in a classroom-type setting and does not include in-the-field instruction.

The Travel Coach may refer the participant to more structured services that provide in-the-field instruction, such as Group Travel Orientation or Bus Buddies.

Figure 1 Travel Coach Details

Program	Level of Service 1 (least intense) to 5 (most intense)	Service Type	Demographic Served	Client Ability	Mobility Level	Curriculum	Field Trip Type	Instructor	Instructor Skill Level
Travel Coaching	2	One-on-one or Group	Seniors General Public	Limited to no physical disabilities	Moderate to high	Phone or in-person instruction	No field trip	Travel Coach	Knowledgeable of the fixed route system

Who are Travel Coaches?

Travel Coaches are employed at area non-profits and human service organizations as:

- Social Workers
- Mobility Managers
- Administrative Staff
- Health Care Workers
- Other Staff

Travel Coaching is usually the secondary or tertiary responsibility of this staff member, who performs Travel Coaching only periodically, as requested. Travel Coaches do not receive extensive training outside of what is provided in this manual.

Who is targeted to receive Travel Coaching?

Travel Coaching is designed for any person who requires a limited amount of training in order to travel on the bus or train. These potential trainees have full cognitive abilities and very limited physical disabilities, if any. Trainees require a quick tutorial of how to plan and complete a trip on buses or trains and do not require any in-the-field training.

Some individuals may complete the Travel Coaching program and still need extra practice with a guided field trip. In these cases, Travel Coaches can refer them to a Travel Trainer or Travel Ambassador.

For what tasks are Travel Coaches responsible?

Travel Coaches are responsible for providing the following tasks:

- Travel Coaching Training Session
- Customer Evaluation

TRAVEL COACHING TRAINING SESSION

The Travel Coaching Training Session will provide in-person training on the steps to plan and take a trip on fixed route transit.

The session is designed to fit within a two-hour period of instruction. Suggested timeframes for each component of the classroom training are provided; however, Travel Coaches may choose to use different timeframes depending on the needs of each individual.

Travel Coaches should review the individual's Candidate Identification, Assessment, and Evaluation form to determine if the individual requires the full training session or a modified version. The latter form is designed to assess how capably an individual can navigate fixed route transit and whether training would be a useful option for this individual

The session covers the following:

- Travel skills identification
- Tips for Trips: Barrier Analysis, Safety, and Self-Advocacy
- System Knowledge
- When Things Don't Go As Planned
- Materials
 - The Travel Coaching Training Session Guide is the Travel Coach's script and lesson plan. This should be modified for use for different individuals based on their skills level. Travel Coaches will also need to modify the curriculum to include information about their specific transit system.
 - The Trip Planning Worksheet is used to note specific details for a trip.

Use the TRAVEL COACHING TRAINING SESSION Guide.

Use the TRIP PLANNING WORKSHEET

When training has concluded, the Travel Coach determines if the trainee is able to safely complete a trip on fixed route transit independently. If the trainee feels confident that he or she can complete a trip on fixed route transit on his or her own, he or she has effectively graduated from travel training.

If the trainee needs additional guidance, the Travel Coach should refer him or her to a Travel Trainer or Travel Ambassador.

CUSTOMER FOLLOW-UP EVALUATIONS

See the Candidate Identification, Assessment, and Evaluation document for guidance on conducting customer follow-up evaluations.

TRAVEL COACHING TRAINING SESSION GUIDE

This guide serves as the Travel Coaches' script and lesson plan for successfully using fixed. If there are certain modules or sections in the Training Session guide that are not useful or relevant to a particular individual, the Travel Coach can choose to pass over them.

Module 1: Travel Skills Identification, Motivations and Goal-Setting (Time: 20 minutes)

Travel Coach: Before we begin learning about using public transit, let's discuss what kind of experience you have with it.

Using the Initial Interview Form, discuss the trainees experience with public transportation, why they decided to participate in Travel Coaching, how they currently get around, and any fears or concerns that they have with learning to ride buses or trains.

Travel Coach: What are some examples of the kinds of things you need to be able to do, or you need to know about, to get around on the bus or train?

Prompt for Travel Coach—Sample skills may include:

- Understanding how to pay the fare
- Reading and understanding schedules
- Figuring out which bus or train to take
- Making transfers between bus or trains
- Problem-solving when things don't go as planned (for example, when you miss a bus or train, get on the wrong one)
- Dealing with other riders
- Safety tips

Travel Coach: We'll be covering most/all of the topics during this training. Now let's talk a little bit about what your goals are for this training.

Using the **Candidate Interview form** that contains the trainee's goals, discuss each goal with him or her.

See the CANDIDATE INTERVIEW FORM.

Module 2: Tips for Trips: Barrier Analysis, Safety, and Self-Advocacy (Time: 20 minutes)

Travel Coach: In a few minutes, I'm going to teach you some of the specific things you need to know to get around by public transit, but before I get started, I want to give you some tips that can help you to travel on transit safely and comfortably.

There are three main parts to any transit trip:

1. Getting from your origin/home to the bus or train stop
2. Catching, riding, and exiting from the bus or train
3. Getting from the bus or train stop to your destination

It can be easy to focus just on the middle part—the part of the trip that takes place on the bus or train—but it's important to think about the whole trip when using transit.

- Some things to think about when planning your trip include the following:
 - The best route/path to take to the bus or train stop. Some things to consider include:
 - Does one route have more continuous or better quality sidewalks?
 - Does one route avoid intersections that may be difficult to cross safely?
 - Is one route a lot steeper than others?
 - Is the stop to which you are going in a well-traveled area, with lots of pedestrians, lighting, etc. nearby?
 - Your stamina. You probably will have to do some walking both at the beginning and at the end of your trip.
 - How long of a walk will you have on both ends of your trip?
 - How steep are the routes you will need to take?
 - Will you be carrying shopping bags, packages, or other items?
 - Are there places to rest along the way if you need to?
 - Does your chosen stop have a bench/shelter (the transit agency may be able to provide this information)?
 - The weather. It may be a hot or a cold day, or it may be rainy.
 - How should you dress to be most comfortable?
 - Do you need a hat, sunglasses, an umbrella, or different shoes?
 - What else would make traveling in more extreme weather more comfortable?
 - The time of day you will travel. You may be more comfortable traveling when the bus or train system is less crowded.
 - The length of the overall trip.

- How much time will it take you to get from your home to your destination, and back to your home?
- How many transfers will you need to make (if any)?

Travel Coach: Using transit isn't always easy, and you may identify some potential barriers or challenges when thinking through your trip. The good news is that a lot of barriers to using transit have solutions. Let's come up with a few solutions together.

Question 1: Let's say that you're planning a transit trip, and find that the walk from your house to the route serving your destination is too far to travel without resting. What might be a solution?

- Answer. There may be a closer route you can use to connect to the route serving the destination
- Answer. There may be a park, or a café, or a friend's house along the way, where you could plan to take a short break to rest.

Question 2. Let's try another scenario. What are some things you can do if you want to make sure that you can get a seat on the bus or train?

- Answer. You may want to plan their trip during off-peak hours, if possible. (Preferably between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.)
- Answer. You should be comfortable asking other riders and/or the driver to make a seat available in the priority seating area on the bus or train.

Travel Coach: Before we move on, I'd also like to discuss transit etiquette and safety. While it is rare for injuries or crime to occur on transit vehicles or in transit stations, there are a few basic things you can do to make traveling on buses and trains safer and more enjoyable for yourself and others.

The following are some tips for transit safety:

- If possible, bring just the essentials with you on your transit trip, so that you can keep your hands free for holding on when boarding, exiting, and moving through the bus or train.
- Stay seated until the bus or train has come to a complete stop.
- Take your time when boarding and exiting. If you move more slowly than others, you may feel that you are inconveniencing the driver or other riders, but keep in mind that everyone needs a little extra time sometimes—for example, when loading a bicycle onto the rack on the front of the bus or train, when boarding with children, when carrying packages or luggage, etc. Take as much time as you need. Taking a seat near the door can help reduce the time needed to alight.

When walking, always cross at a crosswalk or traffic light if possible.

Here are a few more tips related to personal safety. When using transit, or walking to and from bus or train stops:

- Travel with confidence and purpose: stand tall, walk with your head up and be alert. Avoid giving the impression that you don't know where you are.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Choose walking routes to and from bus/train stops that are well-lit and populated.
- Plan your travel route before beginning your trip. Check out maps, street names, etc.
- Don't provide any personal information to strangers. The person you are talking to may be safe, but others who may overhear might not be.
- If you find yourself feeling uneasy or threatened while riding the bus or train, change seats and alert the bus or train driver if necessary.
- Ride towards the front of the bus or train, close to the driver, if possible; however, if the bus or train is full, you should move towards the back of the bus/train to make room for other passengers who are going to board or depart at the next stops/stations.

Here are a few tips related to travel:

- When you get on the train or bus, look for designated seats for older adults and persons with disabilities.
- If the bus/train is crowded, move towards an area that has space. Do not move towards the front of the bus/train until your stop is the next stop.
- Keep aisles clear of your belongings. If the bus/train is crowded, keep belongings off empty seats so people may sit in those seats.
- Do not eat or drink on the bus/train.
- Keep noise levels down.

Module 3: System Knowledge (Time: 1 hour)

Note: Before you begin this module, you should get at least one map of a nearby transit route and plot out a sample round trip.

Travel Coach: We're now going to go through how to plan for a trip, how to read a schedule, the different kinds of fares, and how to get on and off the bus or train. This is a lot of information, so if you have any questions as we go along, please do not hesitate to ask them.

Gathering Information for Trip Planning:

Getting around on buses and trains in the Atlanta region is a lot easier if you've done some planning ahead of your trip. There are a few options available to help with your planning:

- Metro Atlanta's one-click stop for transit at www.atltransit.org
- The MARTA My Commute website at www.itsmarta.com or call (404)-848-5000
- Cobb County Transit at www.cobbcounty.gov or call (770) 427-4444
- Cherokee County Transportation at <http://www.cherokeega.com/Transportation/> or call (770)345-6238
- Gwinnett County Transportation at <http://www.gwinnettcountry.com/portal/gwinnett/Departments/Transportation> or call (770)882-5010.

Fixed Route Transit Overview

Travel Coach: Before we take a look at a map and plan a trip, I'd like to go over some general information with you about fixed route service. First, every bus or train runs on a fixed route system and is scheduled to arrive at each bus or train stop at a designated time.

Question 1. How often do you think the bus or trains run?

- Answer. Different buses and trains run on different schedules and frequencies. Buses on busy streets tend to run more often, so your wait time should be shorter. For example, in this neighborhood [pick a location near where the participant lives], Line [pick a line they might use] runs every [XX] minutes during the rush hour, whereas it only runs every [YY] minutes in the middle of the day.

The system map lists all the routes and times for both weekdays and weekends.

Question 2. What is the difference between day time and night time lines?

- Answer. Bus and trains tend to run less often at night because there are fewer riders, and late at night some do not run at all.

Question 3: Do you intend to ride the bus or train after 10 P.M.?

If not:

If you are interested in the future about night service, you can find information on night service by calling the [their transit provider's] customer service phone number or using Google Transit.

If someone does ride late at night:

Note: The Travel Coach needs to describe the night service that [their transit provider] provides and give interested participants the night service schedule.

Question 4. What is the difference between weekday and weekend bus or train schedules?

- Answer. Some fixed route transit that runs during the week may not run on the weekends, and those that run on weekends generally are less frequent. [Your local provider] will also post notices about holiday bus or train schedule changes or any service changes.

Reading a Map

Travel Coach: All of the bus or train routes in [your local service area] are shown in individual maps that cover different geographic areas. Please take a look at your system map. We will look at the _____ map [choose a map that covers a local area].

You have a lot of information here on scheduling. We'll get to it in a minute. But let's turn to the side that has the map.

Note: Spend a few minutes describing the areas served by the map or asking questions so the trainee can describe them for you.

Schedule Reading Exercise (With Trip Planning Worksheet)

Travel Coach: As I mentioned before, you can get a lot of information from the system map. However, if you want to have really specific information about when the bus runs in the area near your home, it is best to use the schedule for that route. [Local Transit System] has schedules for every bus or train route in the system that tell you the time the bus or train should arrive at the beginning of the route and at key stops along the way. You find those stops by reading the map. When you see the one closest to where you want to get on, you can estimate what time you should arrive at your stop. It's always a good idea to arrive early in case the bus or train is early.

Make the point that this exercise would be a little more difficult if the trainee doesn't live near one of the time points. If they need to know accurately when the bus will arrive, and they don't live near a time point, they may find it easiest to simply call their local transit agency. That number should be on the map.

Now let's look at the **Trip Planning Worksheet** that you can use to keep track of information. If you take a look at the Worksheet, you'll see that there are places to fill in your starting point and destination, the time and day you want to travel, the route you will use, and times the bus is scheduled to pick you up and to arrive at your destination, and how much the trip will cost.

Use the TRIP PLANNING WORKSHEET

Using schedules for a specific bus or train route, work with the trainee to figure out the exact time the bus will be arriving at the closest stop. You can walk the trainee through filling out the Trip Planning Worksheet as you go.

Map Reading Exercise

Using the map and sample round trip you developed, talk through some scenarios with the trainee. Travel Coaches may want to highlight the route with a marker or ask the trainee to highlight the route and some sample times to leave or arrive. .

Question 1: Let's say you live on the corner of _____ Street and _____ Street (point this location out on the map). And you want to go to _____ to do some shopping and then meet a friend for an early dinner. How would you decide which bus or train to take?

Question 2: Let's say it's a Tuesday afternoon, and you will be ready to leave around 3:30 p.m. Which bus or train should you take?

Question 3: Which bus or train would you take to get home before 8pm?

Note: The Travel Coach will assist the trainee with finding the correct answer(s) for each of the above questions.

Purchasing a Ticket

Travel Coach: Before we talk about planning a trip, I also want to point out information about bus or train fares. There are special, reduced fares for riders who are 65 and older and persons with disabilities.

Note: The Travel Coach will need to research and describe the relevant fares for the transit system that the trainee will be using. Travel Coaches are required to keep up to date on fares and how to obtain tickets and passes.

Transferring Between Transit Mode

Travel Coach: If you are going a fairly long distance, you may find yourself having to transfer to another bus or train or even to another transit system. This should not be a problem if you do some trip planning ahead of time.

If the trainee will require a transfer the Travel Coach should refer them to a Travel Ambassador or Travel Trainer to receive additional information on this topic.

Module 4: When Things Don't Go as Planned (Time: 20 minutes)

Travel Coach: We're going to talk about some unplanned situations that can come up and how you could deal with them.

Missing the Bus or Train

Question 1. Buses and trains run on a time schedule. In what situations are you likely to miss a bus or train?

- Answer:
 - If you arrive at the bus or train stop later than the scheduled arrival/departure time,
 - If the bus or train is running ahead of schedule, or
 - If you stand where the bus or train does not stop.

Question 2. If you miss the bus or train, what should you do?

Answer: First, you need to know when the next scheduled bus or train will arrive or if there is another bus or train (different route) that can take you to your destination within a reasonable time. Next, you will have to decide on whether to wait for the next bus or train or whether finding another form of transportation, such as a taxi, is necessary.

Missing the Destination Stop

Question 1. If you realize you've ridden past your bus or train or train stop, what should you do?

- Answer: Ask for assistance from the bus or train operator

Steps to follow when missing the stop are:

- Decide how far you traveled beyond your intended stop.
- If it's only a few blocks, or less, to the next stop, get off the bus or train and walk back.
- If the bus or train has gone several blocks before you've realized that the stop was missed, you should tell the operator what your destination is. You may be given the following options
 - Walk back
 - Ride to the end of the line and ride the return back to your stop
 - Buy a transfer, cross the street and take a bus or train in the opposite direction

Boarding the Wrong Bus or train

Question 1. What should you do if you have boarded the wrong bus or train?

- Answer. If you realize that you boarded the wrong bus or train early in the route, you should use the same procedure described for missing a bus or train stop. Tell the operator what your destination is. The operator will give you information on how to get back to the stop. Use your schedule and find when the next scheduled bus or train will arrive or if there is another route that can take you to your destination. Next, you will have to decide on whether to wait for the next bus or train or whether finding another form of transportation, such as a taxi, is necessary.

Becoming Lost or Off Track

Travel Coach: You may get lost or off-track if you are unexpectedly confused by something. You may realize you are off track when the landmarks do not match with what you remember or if the street names don't match the ones you noted when you were planning your trip.

If you do become lost, you should:

- Use the train or bus route map, a paper map, or a map app on your smart phone to figure out where you are and where you need to go.
- If you don't have a map, find a pay phone or use your cell phone to call the place that you are traveling to or a friend who knows the area.
- Look at the names of the streets at the nearest intersection where you are standing. You can either use them and your map to figure out where to go, or you can tell them to the person who is helping you figure out where to go.

This concludes the Travel Coach Training Session. If the trainee is confused about any one topic, the Travel Coach can reiterate the main points. If the trainee requires further training, the Travel Coach can refer them to a Travel Ambassador for Travel Orientation. If the trainee requires in-the-field training, the Travel Coach can refer them to a Bus Buddy program.

TRIP PLANNING WORKSHEET

GOING THERE

Starting Address/Intersection: _____

Destination Address/Intersection: _____

I want to: (choose one)

Depart around: _____ am__ pm__

Arrive around: _____ am__ pm__

Day of the week: _____

Route Number: _____

Location of Bus Stop: _____

Scheduled Boarding Time: _____

Scheduled Arrival Time: _____

Next Bus (same route): _____

Alternate Route (if any): _____

Price of Trip: _____

Other Notes:

COMING BACK

Starting Address/Intersection: _____

Destination Address/Intersection: _____

I want to: (choose one)

Depart After: _____ am__ pm__

Arrive After: _____ am__ pm__

Day of the week: _____

Route Number: _____

Location of Bus Stop: _____

Scheduled Boarding Time: _____

Scheduled Arrival Time: _____

Next Bus (same route): _____

Alternate Route (if any): _____

Price of Trip: _____

Other Notes: