

Competencies for the Practice of Mobility Management



The National Center for Mobility
Management

2016

Competencies for the Practice of Mobility Management

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About the National Center for Mobility Management

The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) is a national technical assistance center supported through a cooperative agreement with the Federal Transit Administration. The mission of the Center is to facilitate communities to adopt transportation strategies and mobility options that empower people to live independently, and advance health, economic vitality, self-sufficiency, and community.

The Center’s primary activities support Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grantees, mobility managers, and partners in adopting proven, sustainable, and replicable transportation coordination, mobility management, and one call–one click transportation information practices. NCMM provides assistance to communities through NCMM Regional Liaisons, a peer-to-peer network, short-term technical assistance, web resources, and one-on-one phone and e-mail support. NCMM staff deliver in-person and virtual trainings, a monthly e-newsletter, webinars, and conference calls while also disseminating descriptions of relevant promising practices, including “snapshots” of a particular topic or trend as well as a more in-depth database of practices. NCMM staff continuously collaborate with mobility management practitioners across the country and align and support the goals and activities of the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) and the Federal Transit Administration’s United We Ride program.

NCMM is operated through a consortium of three national organizations—the American Public Transportation Association, the Community Transportation Association of America, and the Easterseals Transportation Group—and is led by three co-directors, one from each of the three organizations.



Building Competencies for the Practice of Mobility Management

About:

The National Center for Mobility Management, in collaboration with the Federal Transit Administration and Mobility Managers across the country, was tasked with developing competencies for the practice of mobility management. The competencies outlined in this document will enable a diverse range of mobility managers and other related personnel to increase their knowledge, skills and expertise in the growing field of mobility management. Thusly, the establishment of mobility management competencies will bring an increased sense of professionalism to this growing field.

The process by which NCMM developed competencies for the practice of mobility management is outlined in Section III of this report. NCMM used a field-driven process to ensure that the competencies identified were responsive and vetted by professionals working across a diverse range of mobility management settings. The individuals targeted for input as NCMM developed the competencies are in similar roles of the professionals we anticipate using the competencies in their day-to-day activities and positions.

It is our hope that our work on competencies will assist both individuals who are preparing to enter the mobility management field, as well as those who have already been a part of it. New Mobility Managers can utilize competencies for the practice of mobility management to educate and inform themselves, their colleagues, and stakeholders on the diverse approaches to providing excellent community-based services. Our goal is to educate and enhance the thought process behind the provision of mobility management. We also seek to connect mobility managers with their colleagues in innovative ways so that practices may be enhanced and/or replicated. Developing competencies that will support the development of a mobility management certification curriculum will provide career ladders for mobility managers, and ultimately the community members they serve.

If you would like to learn more about the National Center for Mobility Management, please visit our website at www.nc4mm.org. For questions specific to this document or to learn more about the field implementation of competencies, please contact Judy L. Shanley, Ph.D. Co-Director of the National Center for Mobility Management, at jshanley@easterseals.com.



Competency Development Process

About:

Throughout the duration of this work, NCMM continuously recognized that there are a host of innovative and diverse mobility managers, programs, and practices occurring throughout the country and that no two programs are alike. As such, this process sought to develop both guiding principles for the field as a whole, and specific competencies related to the type of work mobility managers do in a given community. Standards were developed for each content area, with input from mobility managers who served on the competency development advisory committee. Guiding documents were created to support the competency development work, and NCMM also conducted extensive field feedback to learn about how the proposed competencies could be applied in various mobility management settings. It should be noted that these competencies are voluntary in nature, and are not specific requirements for the practice of mobility management, but are rather intended to be a helpful guide to the field.

Guiding Documents:

NCMM first developed an outline document entitled *Building Competencies for Mobility Management* that outlined the process by which the center would determine competencies while including the diverse voices of the mobility management field. This document was also used to establish a Competency Development Advisory Committee representing 13 mobility management programs in various states across the country.

Next, NCMM developed an in-depth literature synthesis that outlined existing work on related competencies. This synthesis looked at other fields which had recently developed competencies or guidelines for professionalizing their work, as well as what outcomes or impact the developed competencies have had on the field as a result. NCMM surveyed competency tools from the fields of Special Education, Travel Training, and Community Action, just to name a few. Existing mobility management competency products and other resources such as mobility manager job descriptions and curricula that supported the development of competencies for the practice of mobility management were also studied and evaluated.

After the literature synthesis was developed, a validation process was created to review and rank proposed competencies. This process identified and categorized competencies and ensured equal representation of programs and practices by region, population size, focus of practice, and length of time the practice had been in place. All documents were reviewed by the competency development advisory committee and used to create a first draft of competencies, which were then submitted to the field for review during a three-month feedback period.



Field Feedback Process:

NCMM held an extensive field feedback and public comment period designed to give mobility management personnel an opportunity to provide feedback to the first draft of competencies. Survey respondents could rate competencies as being essential, preferred, or recommended, depending on the size and scope of their programs.

Since there are a host of diverse programs and practices throughout the country, NCMM relied on the expertise of those working in the field to provide guidance, feedback and other comments related to NCMM's proposed competencies. All feedback and related information was then analyzed by NCMM and the Competency Development Advisory Committee, and incorporated into the final product as appropriate.

NCMM was also interested in defining and differentiating between administrative-level competencies and those competencies that might be important at the individual or field level. For each proposed competency area, survey respondents offered thoughts on which competencies were most applicable to various settings and levels, ranging from individual supports to community and statewide levels.

A series of 10 customized webinars were also held and presented in each FTA Region. On each webinar (Appendix - Weinbar Powerpoint), NCMM staff outlined the proposed competencies and solicited feedback from the field. A total of 66 individuals completed the survey, and their feedback was incorporated in the final competency document.

Competency Development Goals:

1. Develop mobility management competencies that are valid with current thinking and will serve as broad guiding principles for the field.
2. Develop specific competencies for the various types of mobility managers, programs and systems.

3. Focus on building capacities for the potential use of mobility management competencies on local, statewide and national levels
4. Include and encourage the voices and input of a diverse range of mobility managers across various types of industries, including but not limited to the transit, workforce, medical, veteran, and human service industries.

Competencies for the Practice of Mobility Management

The competencies listed below are designed to be adapted to a particular mobility management program or practice. Some competencies may be essential, preferred, recommended, or not required, depending on the unique nature of an individual program. Also, some competencies may require a particular skill level that separates it from related practices. For example, a Mobility Manager who runs a one call-one click center may need to have an advanced level of technical competency, compared with a Mobility Manager in a less technical role. Mobility Management is a diverse and evolving profession, and competencies can be used at the discretion of professionals, depending on their specific setting and position.

General Competencies for Mobility Management:

1. Address community transportation challenges
2. Understand the unique transportation challenges faced by persons with disabilities, older adults, Veterans, transitioning youth, low income individuals and other vulnerable populations
3. Develop solutions that address unique community challenges
4. Create process improvements
5. Work creatively and in collaboration with stakeholders

Additional Comments from the Field:

- Be able to think outside of the box
- Finding solutions may involve working with other agencies
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of determinants of travel behavior
- General knowledge of funding sources

Transportation Competencies:

1. Address community transportation challenges
2. Local transportation systems and processes knowledge (Beginner/Introductory)
3. Local transportation systems and processes knowledge (Intermediate)
4. Local transportation systems and processes knowledge (Advanced/Expert)
5. Understand various trip planning methods

6. Local transportation resource knowledge
7. Local, regional, or statewide information and referral clearinghouse knowledge (i.e: One call-one click centers)
8. Understand the role of transportation in accessing employment opportunities
9. Understand the role of transportation in accessing medical services
10. Understand the role of transportation in accessing affordable housing
11. Understand the role of transportation in accessing social destinations

Management/Leadership Competencies:

1. Address community transportation challenges.
2. Business development knowledge
3. Project or program management experience
4. Staff training and development skills
5. Committee leadership experience
6. Community leadership desire

Additional Comments from the Field:

- Ability to process complex information and explain it in a simple format
- If management/leadership does not understand the importance of mobility management programs and champion the programs, success is unattainable.

Coordination Competencies:

1. Contribute to the local coordination process
2. Develop priorities for coordination
3. Collaborate within small and large groups
4. Human service transportation coordination experience
5. Collaborate with federal stakeholders
6. Collaborate with statewide stakeholders
7. Collaborate with local/community stakeholders
8. Work across multiple transportation and mobility projects

Additional Comments from the Field:

- True success is dependent upon the right people performing the mobility management and stakeholders supporting the initiative.

Outreach and Marketing Competencies:

1. Seek networking and outreach opportunities
2. Verbally "sell" program or projects via outreach and networking
3. Attend outreach events

Conducting outreach isn't a one-man-band... it requires skills not necessarily from Mobility Managers.

Comment received during validation process

4. Liaise and collaborate with community stakeholder groups
5. Develop social media outreach platforms
6. Develop program enhancing advertisements
7. Write or edit press releases

Program/Financial Administration Competencies:

1. Strategic planning
2. Grant writing
3. Grant reporting
4. Data collection
5. Federal funding stream knowledge
6. State funding stream knowledge
7. Local or community funding stream knowledge
8. Foundation funding stream knowledge
9. Find and contribute to new funding opportunities

Technology Competencies:

1. Assistive technology knowledge or experience
2. Trip planning mobile application knowledge or experience
3. Wayfinding mobile application knowledge or experience
4. Technology procurement experience
5. One call-one click center practice

Get out there and get money!

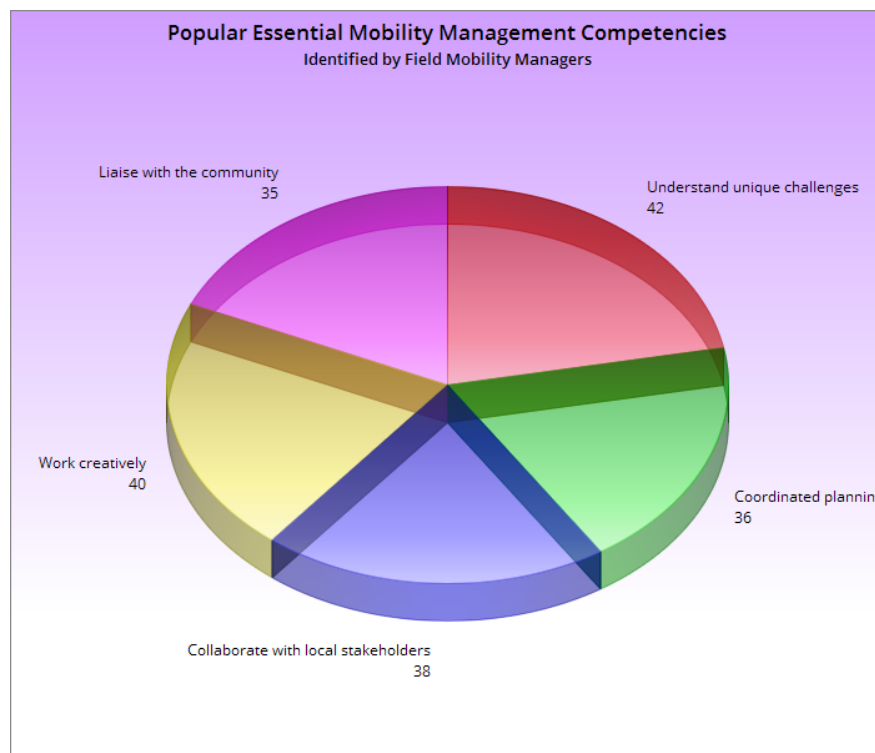
Comment received during validation process

Additional Field Comments:

NCMM Advisors who contributed to this work, and others in the field who provided feedback, were helpful in offering additional suggestions and comments:

- Whenever possible, individuals with disabilities should be hired to coordinate mobility management.
- A key component of growing a successful program is networking within your own transportation organization and building relationships with all departments, including marketing, customer service, and grants/finance.
- Have a basic understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Mobility Managers should be able to participate in regional transportation planning efforts and have familiarity with brokerage concepts and operations so that they can merge different modes into one service.
- Staff in this field must have a positive attitude, a sense of customer service and a desire to truly help people. This is an essential soft skill, along with empathy skills.
- Prior program management experience is really helpful in this line of work.

- Be business savvy and excel in both written and verbal communications.
- Understand the independent living philosophy, which emphasizes consumer control and a civil rights approach to help prevent a medical model approach.
- Work well with your consumers, provide great customer service, and be able to adapt to changing environments.
- Deploy negotiation skills, visualize the value of propositions for each side in any proposal, and understand the cost of trips, service options, and contracted services.
- Training in the transit industry as a whole
- Local and state planning and zoning knowledge
- Knowledge and advocacy of Medicaid, Medicare, and the Affordable Care Act.



Field Implementation of Mobility Management Competencies

About:

NCMM invited various organizations across FTA regions to apply these competencies in practice – and to use them in various ways. Organizations and individuals that were asked to “test out” the implementation of the competencies represented human services organizations, transit agencies,

and planning organizations. We provided the following examples to the field regarding ways the competencies can be used:

- A transit agency may use the competencies to incorporate into communications with their audiences;
- A governmental agency may use the competencies to develop and/or evaluate a job description and make a hiring decision; or
- A mobility manager might use the competencies to assess their own professional development needs and identify professional learning opportunities based on these needs.

Organizations that field-tested the competencies were asked to complete a short questionnaire regarding use of the competencies and offer any perspectives they had regarding usefulness. Information was asked regarding:

- How did you use the competencies:
 - Develop or amend a job description
 - Hire staff
 - Identify professional development needs for my staff
 - Identify professional development needs for myself
 - Communicate information to others about mobility management
 - Incorporate content about competencies in grant application
 - Plan mobility management programs
 - Other ways that you used the competencies (please specify)
- Usefulness of competencies;
- Ease of use; and
- Value to the profession and field.

Over a three-month period, mobility managers implemented the competencies for various purposes and provided us with feedback. Below is an analysis of this feedback.

Feedback received from Mobility Managers regarding Implementing Competencies

One-hundred percent of those who volunteered to participate in field-testing described that they used the competencies to communicate information to others about mobility management. The same percentage of respondents (100%) described the competencies as useful and easy to implement. When asked about future implementation, all respondents (100%), indicated that they were likely to use the competencies in the future, and 100% expressed that the competencies would be valuable to the field. As indicated by the adjacent text box, one of the mobility managers who participated in the field-

The Competencies will be critical for our Mobility Management Staff to speak to specific targeted audiences for our Coordinated Plans rewrites and updates. Also to conduct survey work and educate the consumers about mobility options in their perspective communities.

implementation identified tangible and realistic ways that the competencies could be used in the future, and also referred to particular competencies, such as educating consumers and speaking to target audiences as important in future use.

It is important to note, that it was difficult to garner feedback during the field-implementation phase of NCMM's competency development work. Many mobility management professionals did use the competencies but only a few completed the survey. However, feedback was provided verbally to NCMM staff. Although NCMM offered national webinars, across FTA regions, to highlight our competency work, and included information in our newsletter, in hindsight, NCMM may have had better participation in completing the field-implementation survey, if information about the competency work, with links to the Webinars, were available through our Website as a topical feature. Additionally, one state has a sophisticated mobility management network that has over the years, worked hard to develop a set of attributes and activities for mobility management professionals in their state, and therefore, declined to participate in field-implementation.

Regardless of the method by which field-implementation data was obtained, almost 100% of those who provided feedback or opinion regarding the value, usefulness, and applicability of competencies explained that it was important to strengthen and advance the profession. NCMM will use findings from the field-implementation process, as well as, feedback received through other forums, such as the Webinars, to disseminate information about the competencies. As described in the following section, NCMM plans a comprehensive roll-out of the competency work through multiple forums.

Conclusion and Next Steps

NCMM conducted this competency work based on feedback from the field. Mobility management professionals indicated that their colleagues often did not understand their role or at times had questions about the job duties that they performed. As the profession matures, as mobility management positions expand, and as human services organizations and transit agencies see the value of mobility managers, this work will become even more important.

Mobility management is a broad and diverse profession and industry. This is important, since riders are diverse and have varying mobility and transportation needs. Thus, it is important to reiterate that these competences are suggested practice, and not intended to be a one-size fits all framework for identifying those activities that should comprise the mobility management role. Through our advisory committee, through public outreach, including informational Webinars, and through the field implementation process, we learned a great deal about how the competencies could be implemented in varying settings. We encourage customization of the competencies so that organizations and agencies can ensure that the functions and responsibilities of a mobility management professional in their setting are aligned with their business and operational needs.

As we move to the future, we know that some states are moving forward with developing a credential for mobility management professionals. Similarly, in some mobility sectors, such as the Veterans Administration, there is an effort to develop a credential for those Federal officials who serve in a mobility management capacity. NCMM will continue to track the professionalism of the industry and efforts to standardize the role and duties of those individuals in the profession including.

- Ensuring that the competencies confirmed in this process are integrated into curriculum, training, and products that NCMM and other develop;
- Working with organizations and agencies through NCMM technical assistance to implement competencies;
- Monitoring training and college preparation programs to learn whether the programs that produce mobility management professionals focus on particular competency areas, and how a focus on particular competencies align with what we learned in this extensive process;
- Continuing relationships with professional development providers, such as the [National Transit Institute](#) (NTI) to discern whether the continuing education content of NTI courses also align with what the field identified as mobility management competencies; and
- Assessing how the field is using competencies including for what purpose, and importantly, for what benefit to mobility management professions.

The topic of the professionalism of mobility management careers will be ongoing, and additional research is needed to learn how particular knowledge and skill sets affect the role, and importantly impact upon outcomes for the riders served by the mobility management system. It may be interesting to explore, what difference having particular competencies makes in the position, career development, and role of mobility management professionals. The competency work undertaken by NCMM and reported in this document will hopefully lay the groundwork for future thought, discussion, and research.

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Appendix - example of one of six public Webinars about the competency development process
(double click to start presentation)



Professionalizing Mobility Management: Developing Standards and Competencies

The National Center for Mobility Management
APTA Mobility Management Meeting
December 16, 2015



Appendix – Mobility Management Competencies



Competencies for Mobility Management Professionals

Through an extensive external vetting process, staff from the National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM), with the support of an advisory committee, identified competencies or knowledge areas that are important for mobility management professionals and program administrators who work in diverse settings. The advisory committee was comprised of mobility managers and related personnel from across the country and representative of the diverse ways in which mobility management programs/projects are administered. Mobility management competencies can be used for multiple purposes including:

1. Develop job descriptions, recruit qualified candidates, and hire mobility managers;
2. Integrate content about the competencies in communications, budget decisions, and other administrative operations with policymakers, funders, or community leaders;
3. Plan, deliver, or request professional development;
4. Support a grant application;
5. Reorganize a position within an organization;
6. Assess personal skills and attributes in relation to the demands of a position.

There are seven proposed competency development areas with multiple proposed competencies or skill sets in each area. These competencies are not intended to be prescriptive or a one-size fits all approach. As individuals use the competencies in their settings, it may be important to customize the skill areas to align with the unique needs or circumstances of a setting. Additionally, the competencies needed for a position or setting may vary based on the experience of the individual. The competency areas and the respective competencies for each area are as follows:

1) **General Competencies** or core competencies that are applicable across mobility management settings:

- Address Transportation Challenges
- Understand the unique transportation challenges faced by persons with disabilities, older adults, veterans, transitioning youth, low income individuals and other vulnerable populations
- Develop solutions that address unique community challenges
- Create process improvements
- Work creatively and in collaboration with stakeholders

2) Transportation Competencies. These competencies focus on knowledge and skill in understanding transportation and mobility systems and services.

- Address community transportation challenges
- Local transportation systems and processes knowledge (Beginner/Introductory)
- Local transportation systems and processes knowledge (intermediate)
- Local transportation systems and processes knowledge (advanced/expert)
- Understand various trip planning methods
- Local transportation resource knowledge
- Local, regional or statewide information and referral clearinghouse knowledge (i.e: one call/one click centers)
- Understand the role of transportation in accessing employment opportunities
- Understand the role of transportation in accessing medical services
- Understand the role of transportation in accessing affordable housing
- Understand the role of transportation in accessing social destinations

3) Management/Leadership Competencies. These competencies pertain to program and project oversight or authority.

- Address community transportation challenges
- Business Development knowledge
- Project or Program Management Experience
- Staff Training and Development Skills
- Committee Leadership experience
- Community Leadership desire

4) Coordination Competencies. These competencies emphasize knowledge and skill in building and sustaining relationships and/or bringing people, organizations, and systems together.

- Contribute to the local coordination process
- Develop priorities for coordination
- Collaborate within small and large groups
- Human service transportation coordination experience
- Collaborate with federal stakeholders
- Collaborate with statewide stakeholders
- Collaborate with local/community stakeholders
- Work across multiple transportation/mobility projects

5) Outreach and Marketing Competencies. These competencies focus on communications, using various modalities, to advance or inform diverse audiences.

- Seek networking and outreach opportunities
- Verbally “sell” program or projects via outreach and networking
- Attend outreach events
- Liaise and collaborate with community stakeholder groups
- Develop social media outreach platforms
- Develop program enhancing advertisements
- Write or edit press releases

6) Program/Financial Administration Competencies. This area necessitates fiscal, organizational, and managerial skill in processes and procedures important to mobility management.

- Strategic Planning
- Grant Writing
- Grant Reporting
- Data Collection
- Federal Funding Stream knowledge
- State Funding Stream knowledge
- Local or community Funding Stream knowledge
- Foundation Funding Stream knowledge
- Find and contribute to new funding opportunities

7) Technology Competencies. This competency area focuses on understanding, assessing, and utilizing varying technologies to facilitate mobility management services and systems.

- Assistive Technology knowledge or experience
- Trip planning mobile application knowledge or experience
- Wayfinding mobile application knowledge or experience
- Technology procurement experience
- One-call/One-click center practice

For questions about the competency development process, or opportunities to apply these competencies in your setting, please contact Easter Seals NCMM staff, Judy Shanley at jshanley@easterseals.com or Jordan Snow jsnow@easterseals.com.

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