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Welcome to the April 2021 issue of the MassMobility newsletter! Read on to learn about grant opportunities to support community transportation efforts, upcoming webinars and events, and more news related to mobility for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals in Massachusetts.

The newsletter is compiled by [MassMobility](#), an initiative of the Massachusetts [Executive Office of Health and Human Services](#).

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### Apply for funding

#### Expand mobility for older adults and people with disabilities

MassDOT's annual [Community Transit Grant Program](#) is scheduled to open April 30 and close on June 25. Councils on Aging, non-profits, transit authorities, municipalities, and some taxis can apply for funding for vehicles, mobility management projects, or operating expenses to expand mobility for older adults and people with disabilities. A [January webinar](#) featured three past grantees discussing their projects. [Virtual training sessions](#) - mandatory for new applicants and optional for returning applicants - are scheduled for April 27 and 29. If you have questions or wish to sign up for a training, [contact Jenna Henning](#).

#### Promote transportation justice

Transportation for Massachusetts (T4MA) is seeking [proposals](#) to advance work at the intersection of transportation access and social justice. This opportunity is available to groups organizing and advocating to improve walking, cycling, and public transportation to help reverse racial and economic inequities in Massachusetts. T4MA strongly encourages applications from organizations led by and/or in support of People of Color and underrepresented, under-resourced communities who will engage people most impacted by transportation issues in their community. [Applications](#) are due May 28.

#### More funding opportunities

Find additional funding opportunities on MassMobility's [funding for community transportation](#) webpage.

### In memoriam

Rest in peace [Astrid Glynn](#), MassDOT Rail and Transit Administrator. We would like to thank Astrid for her support of MassMobility. She will be missed.

### Microtransit updates

Across Massachusetts, transit authorities have continued experimenting with using microtransit pilots to increase access to mobility, expand service hours, or increase efficiency. Microtransit is on-demand transportation service run by a public transit authority or municipality. Through technology, riders are able to summon trips in the moment. Microtransit is like dial-a-ride but without needing to reserve in advance, and like Uber or Lyft but with a trained professional driver and an accessible vehicle.

Starting April 12, the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) expanded its Westborough microtransit to also include parts of Shrewsbury. [Via WRTA](#) costs \$2 per ride, or \$1 for rides starting or ending at a commuter rail station.

On April 13, Franklin Regional Transit Authority Administrator Tina Cote presented on the [FRTA Access](#) microtransit service as part of a [webinar on on-demand community transportation](#).

## Guest article on self-advocacy

*MassMobility thanks **Francesco Hladysz**, Board member of Mass Advocates Standing Strong (MASS), for permission to reprint this article, which originally appeared in the [April 2021 MASS Flash](#). A [video version](#) is also available.*

### **Mass Advocates Standing Strong (MASS) Self-Advocate Story of the Month**

by Francesco Hlyadysz, MASS Board member

Hello, my name is Francesco, and I am going to talk to you guys about self-advocacy. Self-advocacy to me is standing up for what you believe in and fighting for what you want in life. Every day I wake up and I say to myself what can I benefit myself and what can I stand up for myself for. I want to help self-advocates achieve their dreams and wants in life. For instance, we all want to learn how to drive a car what are the steps that we had to take to get there.

Step 1 Telling your support that you want to go learn how to drive a car.

Step 2 Start saving up for it because it can be expensive.

Step 3 Calling the registry of motor vehicles (RMV) to request a driver's ed manual.

Step 4 Going over the driver's ed manual rarely carefully because some of the words we will not be familiar with, ask support if you do not understand them.

Step 5 Schedule your driver's test when you are ready for it.

Step 6 Be confident that you can do it and I promise you it will feel good inside once you achieve what you want.

My point I am trying to say to you is that if you do not stand up for what you believe in you will never know what the other side will bring you and once you take steps, I promise you that you will become the self-advocate that you always want to be. All we must remember that we are just like everyone else in this world we may be different, but we are not so different as are in life we may learn or speak differently than others but we're not so different from the inside so let's go start advocating for what we believe in and show the world that we mean business. Thank you for reading this column and let us go show the world that we can be our own advocate and showed the world that we are more capable than we can be.

## Upcoming events

### **Human Service Transportation Consumer Information Sessions**

The final two [sessions](#) are coming up April 26 and 28! The Human Service Transportation (HST) Office, MassHealth, and Brokers invite MassHealth members, consumers of Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) agencies, families, advocates, and others to join a virtual information session on the HST Brokerage. The [HST Office](#) oversees non-emergency medical transportation for MassHealth members through the PT-1 program as well as transportation for five EOHHS agencies. Attend a consumer information session to hear about upcoming changes and improvements coming to the Brokerage in response to feedback received from members and stakeholders. Attendees will meet HST and Broker staff and have the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. For the schedule and information on how to join, visit [www.mass.gov/hstnews](http://www.mass.gov/hstnews). Meetings will be held virtually through Zoom webinar, with call-in access for those connecting by phone. CART, ASL, CDI, and Spanish interpreters will be provided at all meetings.

### **MassDOT Innovation Conference**

Scheduled for May 25-27, MassDOT's annual Innovation Conference will be virtual this year and will feature a track on Mobility, Accessibility, and Transportation Equity. [Learn more and register](#). Check the website regularly as additional details will be added in the coming weeks. If you are interested in attending the Mobility, Accessibility, and Transportation Equity programming but the registration fee poses a barrier, you can [apply for a fee waiver](#).

## Learn something new

### Webinars on vaccine transportation

- Join Grantmakers in Aging on April 27 for a [webinar](#) featuring an Arizona-based approach to helping rural older adults access transportation to vaccines.
- Three recent [National Center for Mobility Management webinars](#) highlighted examples of how public transit and public health stakeholders are collaborating to provide transportation to vaccines.

### Webinars on equity

- The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) launched its new Transportation Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative with a [webinar](#) on April 8.
- Also on April 8, the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative [launched](#) its Equity in Aging committee and webinar series.

### Other community transportation webinars

- [On-demand community transportation](#) - this April 13 webinar highlighted three different ways that organizations are experimenting with offering riders on-demand community transportation. Hear how the Maine Medical Center Cancer Institute offers Lyft rides to patients, the Brookline Senior Center subsidizes GoGo for older adults, and the Franklin Regional Transit Authority is piloting microtransit to expand mobility for the general public.
- [Dementia training for drivers](#) - in two sessions in early March, the Alzheimer's Association and the Massachusetts Councils on Aging offered tips to drivers on how to assist passengers who are living with dementia.
- [Retiring from driving](#) - AAA Northeast hosted a webinar on March 16 to introduce its [Key Timing](#) resources, along with presentations from the [RMV](#) and MassMobility.
- [Older adults and bicycling](#) - a January webinar from the League of American Bicyclists and the AARP Livable Communities discusses insights on bicycling among older adults.

### Reports

- [Inclusive Walk Audit Facilitator's Guide](#) - this December 2020 report includes tips on how to make walk audits more accessible to participants with disabilities (and don't forget these [age-friendly walking](#) resources).
- The National Center for Mobility Management has new reports on [cost-sharing and partnerships](#) and [developing a continuum of mobility services](#).

### National RTAP book group

In the mood for some thematic fiction? National RTAP is launching a "Books in Transit" Discussion Group. The first book is [The Wayward Bus](#) by John Steinbeck, to be discussed on August 18. [Register for the meeting](#).

### MArtap scholarship

Regional Transit Authorities, Councils on Aging, and nonprofits that provide transportation in rural or small urban areas can apply to the [MArtap scholarship](#) program to cover the cost of trainings, conferences, or other professional development opportunities. The scholarship can cover up to \$1000 per person. [Learn more](#) or [apply](#).

## Share your opinion

The MBTA has published a [Request for Information](#) (RFI) about ADA paratransit eligibility determination, travel instruction, and mobility management services for older adults and people with disabilities. Responses will help inform a future Request for Proposals for a consolidated eligibility and mobility center. Organizations and vendors are encouraged to respond even if they do not have answers to every section or direct experience in both paratransit eligibility certifications and mobility management centers. [Responses](#) are due April 28.

## Job posting and volunteer opportunity

WalkBoston is hiring a [Program Manager](#).

The [Transportation Technical Assistance Coordination Library](#) (TACL) is looking for volunteers to review resources on a quarterly basis. TACL offers a centralized location for transportation coordination resources written by the Federal Transit Administration or one of its five technical assistance centers. Reviewers help determine whether new resources have a sufficient focus on transportation coordination to be included in TACL's collection. To learn more, [contact National RTAP](#).

## COVID-19 and community transportation

We want to thank all our readers who are on the front lines helping older adults, people with disabilities, and essential workers. We also wish to send a special thank you to all drivers!

For up-to-date information about a particular transportation service, please contact the transportation provider directly.

Vaccine transportation for MassHealth and Health Safety Net members:

- On February 17, MassHealth announced that [transportation services to and from vaccine appointments](#) are available for any MassHealth member or individual receiving services through the Health Safety Net.
- If you are enrolled in a Senior Care Options or One Care plan or in a Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), you should contact your health plan or PACE provider to request help with transportation.
- All other MassHealth members and Health Safety Net patients need to get approval from MassHealth in the form of a PT-1 request either through your provider or by calling the MassHealth Customer Service Center at (800) 841-2900, and then you will book your ride with a local transportation broker, who will send a driver to pick you up for your appointment and return you home.
- Even though people with MassHealth Limited, MassHealth Family Assistance, the Children's Medical Security Plan, or the Health Safety Net usually aren't able to get transportation to medical appointments through MassHealth, they CAN get transportation to COVID-19 vaccine appointments through MassHealth.
- [Learn more.](#)

Some transit authorities have created webpages to help riders figure out how to take transit to vaccine appointments:

- [MBTA Riders' Transportation Access Group guide](#)
- [Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority](#)
- [Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority](#) - for riders age 65 and older
- [MetroWest Regional Transit Authority](#)
- [Pioneer Valley Transit Authority](#)
- [Worcester Regional Transit Authority](#)

For other options, [find your transit authority here](#) or [search Ride Match](#).

General information from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health:

- [COVID-19 information](#)
- [Vaccine information](#)
- [Vaccine education and outreach materials](#)

Information from other Massachusetts agencies:

- [MassHealth information](#)
- [DDS information](#)
- [MRC updates](#)
- [MCB resources](#)
- [DMH updates](#)
- [MCDHH COVID-19 card](#)
- [Reopening Health and Human Services in Massachusetts](#) (includes transportation guidance)

National resources related to transportation and COVID-19:

- [FTA COVID-19 Resource Tool](#)
- [Community Transportation Association of America \(CTAA\)](#)
- [National Center for Mobility Management \(NCMM\)](#)
- [American Public Transit Association \(APTA\)](#)

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