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Greetings!

We are delighted to release this second issue of the MassMobility newsletter. MassMobility contains news of interest to anyone who is interested in community transportation, human service transportation coordination, or mobility management in Massachusetts. Whether you are a transportation provider, human service agency, or state or local official, we hope you will find this newsletter helpful.

This newsletter is compiled by the [Human Service Transportation \(HST\) Office](#) of the [Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services](#) (EOHHS), as part of our federally funded two-year grant to develop a [Mobility Management Information Network](#) across Massachusetts.

## RTAs focus on veterans transportation

Veterans transportation continues to emerge as an important issue in Massachusetts, and the state's Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) are providing leadership in this arena.

At the local level

Upon hearing that the Veterans' Service Officer (VSO) in New Bedford needed to replace an aging van used to transport veterans to healthcare appointments, [Southeastern Regional Transit Authority](#) (SRTA) Administrator Erik Rousseau offered a long-term no-cost lease of a 2007 van that SRTA was retiring. Representatives of the [Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District](#) and the [EOHHS Human Service Transportation Office](#) joined SRTA and the City of New Bedford in October for a meeting to resolve the details of the lease and discuss further opportunities for partnerships in the region. The meeting was a success, and SRTA and the City are moving forward with signing the lease and registering the van. "We are pleased that this van can support our region's veterans, and we look forward to continuing to partner with the communities of the South Coast," said Rousseau.

At the state level

The RTAs discussed veterans transportation on September 17 as part of their annual [Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities](#) (MARTA) conference. Facilitated by Paula George of the [Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority](#), the session featured members of the [Massachusetts Veterans Transportation Coalition](#) speaking about the importance of transportation for veterans in the Commonwealth and sharing their strategies for meeting veterans'

needs.

At the federal level

Massachusetts RTAs are also receiving federal recognition for their work with veterans. Four RTAs in Massachusetts have received federal grants to support veterans transportation as part of the Federal Transit Administration's [Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative](#). [Montachusett Regional Transit Authority](#) won a grant last year in the first round of awards. Earlier this year, [Berkshire Regional Transit Authority](#), [Cape Ann Transportation Authority](#), and [MetroWest Regional Transit Authority](#) were selected as winners in the second round of funding.

### Interest rising in travel instruction

Even when transportation services are available, individuals cannot take advantage of them if they do not know how to access or use them. Travel instruction can provide the missing link. According to the [Association for Travel Instruction](#), travel instruction is the professional activity of teaching individuals with disabilities, seniors, and others how to use public transportation independently to access their environment and community.

Travel instruction can be a win-win situation for individuals, families, human service agencies, and transit authorities. Individuals and their families benefit from travel instruction because it facilitates independence and community living. It gives people more choice about how to get where they need to go. By offering travel instruction, human service agencies can help the people they serve increase their mobility and their independence. Transit authorities benefit from travel instruction because it can help them increase ridership and save money. Riders may be able to shift some of their trips off of paratransit services on to fixed route services, reducing costs for transit agencies.

Currently, many organizations across Massachusetts are interested in expanding existing travel instruction programs, reviving past programs, and creating new programs. If you currently provide any form of travel instruction or would like to in the future, please [contact us](#) to help us map out where resources are available.

### Travel instruction across generations

Although "Sara" qualified for the ADA paratransit service offered by the [Worcester Regional Transit Authority](#) (WRTA), she was interested in trying out the fixed route bus. She and her mother, "Alicia," met with WRTA staff to learn about the free travel training that WRTA provides. Alicia was concerned about Sara's safety on the public bus, but everyone agreed to give it a try. After travel training, Sara was comfortable riding the bus during the day and continued to ride paratransit before dawn and after dusk. Over time, as Alicia saw how easy it was for Sara to use the bus, Alicia decided to stop driving herself to work and begin commuting by bus instead. She signed herself up for travel training and now enjoys a range of benefits including saving money on gas, paying a reduced insurance rate, and receiving a transit pass subsidy from her employer.

### National travel training course held in Boston

From September 24 to 26, [Easter Seals Project ACTION](#) held an introductory travel training course in Boston. Participants came from

across the country, including a number of teachers from Massachusetts and a representative of the Cambridge in Motion [transportation coordination team](#). The course introduced the basics of travel training and street crossing and included a special breakout session for educators.

In addition to in-person trainings, Project ACTION offers a range of resources on travel instruction, including documents and online courses. To learn more, check out their [webpage on travel instruction resources](#) or sign up for their [upcoming webinar on unexpected challenges in traveling](#).

### **Berkshire Rides celebrates 10 years of service**

Congratulations to [Berkshire Rides](#) on ten years of providing community transportation services in Northern Berkshire County. Since 2002, Berkshire Rides has provided over 500,000 rides, serving an impressive 32 percent of the region's employees through its [employment transportation](#) services. On October 22, supporters and users of Berkshire Rides gathered to celebrate the ten year mark. Two riders, a local employer whose employees use the service, and an employment nonprofit that uses the service to help consumers find jobs testified to the value of the service, while local, state, and federal elected officials shared congratulatory words and reiterated the value of the service to the region.

### **New kiosks seek to bring mobility options and other services to seniors in their communities**

[Greater Lynn Senior Services](#) (GLSS) is launching The Kiosk for Living Well, a new component of [Mobility Links](#) that will bring resources and information about transportation and other services directly to seniors in their communities. In the kiosks, trained advisors will offer seniors learning tools, resources, and referrals in order to help activate consumers in a wide range of areas including mobility, health, and meaningful social connections. Through the kiosks, GLSS seeks to offer seniors the opportunity to live fuller and more integrated lives within their communities. Kiosks will be introduced at [Longevity Connection](#) (at North Shore Elder Services), at [SeniorCare](#) (at Beverly Council on Aging), and in a regional public library. For more information or to volunteer, please call (781) 586-8592.

### **Transportation coordination teams convene in Shrewsbury**

On October 26, members of [transportation coordination teams](#) across the state gathered for the sixth bi-annual meeting since the teams first gathered at a transportation coordination institute in 2009. Highlights included presentations on the [Executive Order 530 Commission's](#) final report, changes to federal funding from [MAP-21](#), and [state funding opportunities](#). Teams shared updates with each other on new developments since the previous meeting in April. In small groups, the Acton team presented on a municipality-led Transportation Management Association that they are developing, and [Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority](#) presented its soon-to-be released trip planner for feedback. Small groups in the afternoon gave participants the chance to discuss how to develop a statewide network to support the development and expansion of travel instruction and to offer feedback on a brief that [Work Without Limits](#) and the [EOHHS Human Service Transportation Office](#) are developing on vehicle share models. For more information about the transportation coordination teams or any particular sessions from the

October meeting, please [contact us](#).

### Looking for funding?

We recently updated our funding resources webpage to reflect changes at the national and state levels. Check out our [new page](#), and [let us know](#) about any additional funding resources we should add to our list.

### Follow us on twitter

Are you on twitter? If so, follow us @MassMobility for links to community transportation resources relevant to organizations and agencies here in Massachusetts. If you aren't on twitter, you can still see our posts online at [twitter.com/MassMobility/](https://twitter.com/MassMobility/).

What social media are you using? [Let us know](#) where you like to find information and where you like to share information.

### Upcoming events and funding opportunities

HST has launched a [calendar](#) of mobility management events and funding opportunities for Massachusetts.

### We want to know your stories

If you have suggestions for news items or topics to cover in future newsletters, please [contact us](#). Comments, questions, and feedback are also welcome.

### Please share this newsletter

Please forward this newsletter widely to others who are interested in mobility management, community transportation, or related topics and encourage them to [subscribe](#) to receive future newsletters and publications.

