



Move Together NY

A Regional Transportation Project

Helping people get to work and medical appointments

New Mobility Manager's Guide & How To's

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Contents

1. What is Mobility Management in Upstate NY?.....	3
1.1 In the beginning	3
1.2 Resources	4
2. Getting to know the community.....	6
3. Networking with other mobility managers.....	9
4. Regulations.....	10
5. Programming (when to create, collaborate or reinvent the wheel)	11
6. Conclusion	12
References	12

1. What is Mobility Management in Upstate NY?

Introduction:

Mobility Management is about bringing people together. Bringing together the people who need transportation, with the people who provide transportation and the people who can pay for transportation to address community transportation needs.

It's making the most of existing resources, creating new services when needed and looking at the issues through the lens of the rider.

The definition above is a variation of the one provided by the National Center for Mobility Management. The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) definition is:

“Mobility management is a customer-focused approach to creating and implementing transportation solutions that respond to mobility needs. It includes a wide and varied range of strategies to improve mobility access in urban, suburban, and rural areas for all individuals regardless of ability, age, income, or destination. As such, mobility management encompasses activities from one-on-one services for individual customers to system-level solutions for moving high volumes of travellers. In essence, it's about managing mobility options in the best way possible to meet transportation needs affordably, efficiently, and effectively.” (“What is mobility management”, n.d.).

Now let's share some great existing resources which will give you a good idea of how mobility management functions on a national level as well as cement the idea that it's a fluid, ever-changing process that is highly customizable to the community you are representing.

1.1 In the Beginning...

Mobility Managers come from diverse backgrounds and they bring a variety of strengths to the table. The [National Center for Mobility Management](#) lists some jobs descriptions from around the country. They have also published job-related competencies with a national focus.

But what does the job look like from a NY perspective? The answer is, *it varies*, but is similar across the state.

- It's about networking and being involved with the transportation providers and human service agencies throughout your community. (Whether a city, county or region)
- It's about listening to the needs of the community and identifying gaps in transportation services.
- It's about facilitation: bringing together people to help solve the community transportation needs
- It's about innovation: looking for creative ways and partnerships to address the needs
- It's about funding: Seeking funds to promote the ideas that solve community transportation needs
- It's about education: educating the public about available services, educating community organizations about what's available and how mobility management can help address their transportation needs.

- It's about partnerships: a Mobility Manager facilitates partnerships between entities. These partnerships are about meeting needs with existing funding, or applying for funding, but most of the time, there's no funding.
- It's about doing more with the same funds. Government or agencies will ask you how much can they 'save' with mobility management. The truth is, funds are always absorbed by something. Mobility Management is about doing *more* with the same funds.
- It's about networking: A mentor once advised, that a mobility manager who never leaves the office, isn't doing their job. Mobility Managers need to be out in the community, out learning from each other and out learning about other programs, challenges and opportunities in other communities.

1.2 Resources:

Below are existing, valuable resources that will assist you in navigating the world of mobility management.

Site	Website	Why Useful
National Center for Mobility Management	https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/	Information, training, news, and other information.
Community Transportation Association of America	https://ctaa.org/	Annual Expo, training and information
NTI (Nat'l Transit Institute)	https://www.ntionline.com/	Online, in-person and webinar training and information
National Rural Transit Assistance Program	https://www.nationalrtap.org/Home	Training, tool kits, webinars and through NYSDOT contact, reimbursement for approved workshops and conferences.
NYS Public Transit Association	https://nytransit.org/	NYS advocacy for transit, but also encourages mobility management through annual conference.

Move Together NY	https://www.movetogetherny.org/	A project based in NYS which supports mobility management programs and the challenges associated with multi-modal, cross county transportation. Provides resources, education and outreach opportunities.
National Center for Mobility Management	https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/acronyms-of-organizations-programs-and-commonly-used-terms/	Acronyms of organizations, programs & commonly used terms.
5311 Funding-NYSDOT	https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/public-transportation/rural-programs/5311	Overview, descriptions and links as well as forms and application materials.
5310 Funding-NYSDOT	https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/public-transportation/specialized-transportation/5310	Overview, descriptions and links as well as forms and application materials.
5307 –FTA formula funds	https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/urbanized-area-formula-grants-5307	Overview, descriptions, tools and contact information.

2. Getting to know the Community

Mobility Managers may already be familiar and engrained in their communities, but it's important to understand your audience. For instance, if your background is in business, you may be more in tuned with employers or the Chamber of Commerce. This is a huge benefit, but you may not be aware of the non-profit and human services of your community. In almost all cases, non-profits and government agencies will be the primary focus of your efforts due to their involvement with transportation disadvantaged populations. You may have extensive transit experience, but as a colleague once told me (who had 15+ years of transit experience and service development) "I thought I knew about transportation needs, until I went to work for DSS (Dept. of Social Services)."

Therefore, when you first begin your journey into mobility management, you will want to introduce yourself to as wide a swath of the community as possible.

The most important part of this exercise is to learn who the stakeholders are, what services they provide and most importantly how you may be able to help them.

When introducing yourself to community stakeholders, it is not an introductory sales pitch about the things you can or hope to do in the community. Stakeholders need to know you're interested in them and learning about what their needs. If you are filling an existing position, the same process applies. The stakeholders need to get to know you before they will trust you and before you can establish a relationship to address community needs. *This takes time, sometimes a year, so don't get frustrated.*

How to get started:

If you're not familiar with the human services networks, this is a good place to start as these agencies typically support the same populations you will be focusing on. Below is a list of suggestions to help you get started:

Human Services Coalition (Committee): A group of this type exists in almost every community, although the name may vary. This group is made up of leaders or middle management of local non-profits and government human service agencies such as DSS, Aging services, workforce or employment services, charitable agencies, family or children's services, disability services, transportation services, housing, some healthcare or long-term care services. They typically meet quarterly, sometimes monthly. They will be a good source of identifying transportation needs, what programs currently exist and may help create solutions. How to get connected: Reach out to one of the Directors of the agency, explain who you are and ask if there is such a group that you might attend a meeting to learn more about their needs. *It's not about introducing you and what you can do, it's about learning who they are and what they need.*

Transit meetings: If you have transit service in your community, they report to someone and may have various groups they belong to or meetings they facilitate. If your position isn't already housed at transit, you will need to be entwined with transit to get to understand their services. Many agencies either host or attend the following types of meetings:

- Public Transit/Human Services Coordinated Transportation Meetings (more listed below)
- Rider's Advisory Committee
- Transportation Providers Committee or network

- Transit Board Meeting

How to get connected: If you aren't already working for the transit agency, ask who the general Manager is. This can be found on the website, or normally any Human Service Agency who buys transit fare will know who the point of contact person is. They will be able to advise you how transit functions and what committees may be of interest to you.

Public Transit/Human Services Coordinated Transportation Meetings: Sometimes known as Coordinated Transportation Meetings:

These meetings were developed from funding requirements. Former federal funding programs required that such a committee be developed. The funds from these programs were passed to the state, and the state mandated that a plan be created and updated every 4 years, which identifies the gaps in transportation needs, as well as who provides service and priority areas to address. These meetings are facilitated by various people throughout the state. *This may be your job to create, and facilitate these meetings and it may be your responsibility to update the plan.* In some counties, the job falls to the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization). Your job will be to identify whose responsibility it is, and look to participate. How to get connected: If you're not sure who to contact, start with your *local transit provider* as they are almost always a member of this committee.

Aging / Disabilities Services Committee: This group is sometimes two succinct groups, but in some communities they are combined. There is generally an Aging Services organization which may be either an independent non-profit or part of the local government services. Examples are Office for the Aging, Senior services, Senior Centers, Long-term Care councils. How to get connected: Start with looking up the Director of the Aging services, and discuss a time to get to know them. Throughout that conversation (whether in-person or on the phone) ask about what meetings may involve other aging/disability services. When possible, try and get an in-person meeting, you will be able to establish a relationship faster with in-person meetings.

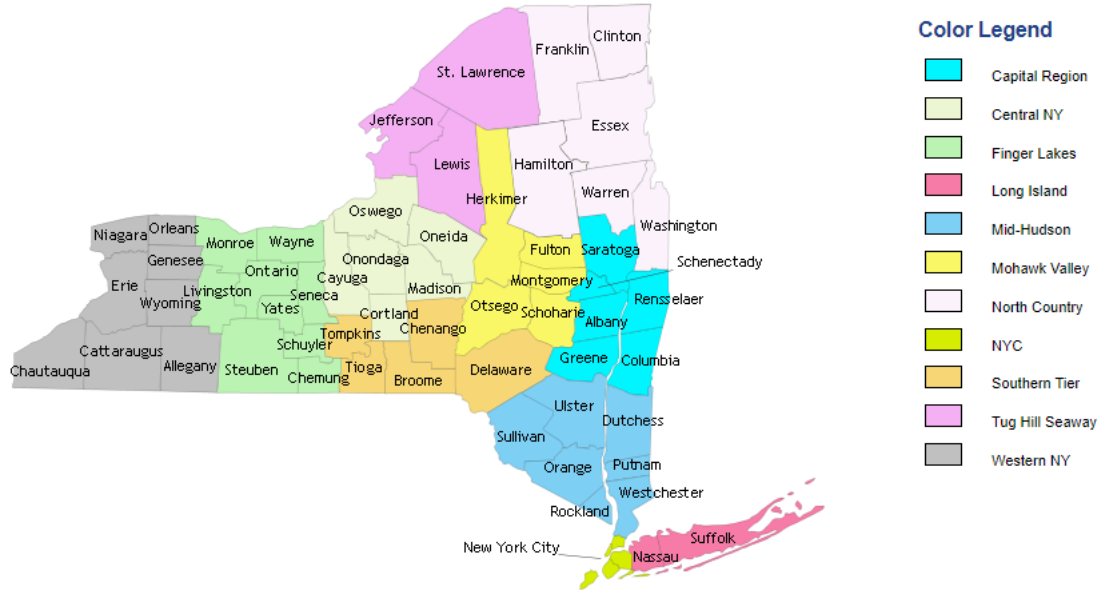
Chamber of Commerce Events/Meetings: Even though you may not run into many non-profit or government agencies here, your local officials may attend and the major employers typically attend. This will expand your reach to employers as you seek to gain an understanding of where people work and when, typically HR managers will not invite you to meet them and learn more, but you may gain "an in" by going to Chamber events or meetings.

Veteran Organizations: If you have a VA, locate their PR person and Mobility Specialist or Mobility Manager. How to get connected: If you can't get through, as they are not always easy to connect with, try your local Veterans Service Organization, DAV or other Veteran non-profit service. They will all be a wealth of knowledge and typically are happy to have your involvement to assist them in meeting Veteran needs.

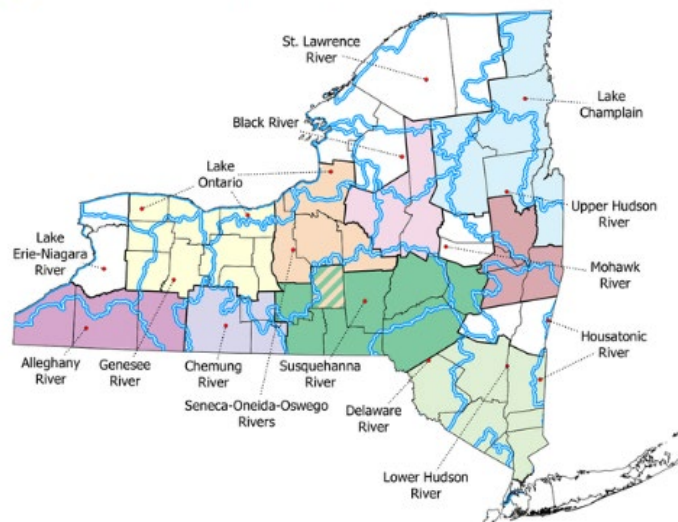
Healthcare: This can be another iron curtain. If you don't already have contacts, or work in healthcare, it can be difficult to navigate. How to get connected: Try your Rural Health organizations. (Rural Health Network) or others. Typically, every rural and rural-ish area has one that covers the County or multiple counties. Another avenue to try are the NY organizations called DSRIP (Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment) programs. This is NY's effort at Medicaid redesign. There are multiple regional DSRIP's across the State, all with different names. Although DSRIP was supposed to end within 5 years, there are millions of dollars invested, thousands of jobs and is likely to continue. Find your region and start looking for

contact agencies. They all have websites so you can search that. Here's a place to start: https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/redesign/dsrip/ .

Every organization divides the state differently. That's important to know. DSRIP regional map is below:



Planning Department: Get to know your County/City Planner. They are a wealth of information and play various roles when it comes to transportation. Don't assume they all do the same thing. Like Mobility Management, they are fluid positions, and are responsible for different things in different communities. You can learn more about regional areas through the New York State Association of Regional Councils (NYSARC) Not to be confused with (NYSARC) yes, it was the same acronym, but the other NYSARC is now the Arc of New York State and refers to a group of a chapter- based non-profits that provide supports to people with developmental disabilities. Here's the planning council's version of regions throughout the state:



How to get connected: Start with your local Planner and try for an in-person meeting. Get to know their projects, many may be working on a comprehensive plan or update to the plan. They may even seek your input once they get to know you.

Employment Services: In many areas the unemployment related entity which officially handles job-seekers and displaced job seekers, is Workforce NY. There's generally a work center or site in each county, but it may be connected to a larger, regional entity. How to get connected: Go to the work center and introduce yourself to the site manager. The smaller sites are almost always busy, so be brief and try and schedule an appointment. Other ways to connect with employers are temp agencies. Many are for-profit companies, but they usually have a good grasp on the employment needs within the area as well as the common challenges.

3. Networking with other Mobility Managers and Practitioners

One important fact to remember is you are not alone. The Mobility Managers of New York have a culture which includes sharing projects, best practices, what has worked and what either didn't work at all, or what they would change about a solution they tried. *It is important for you to get to know who your neighboring Mobility Managers are and to participate in their meetings.*

Ideally, you should participate in all neighboring county's Coordinated Transportation Meetings. This is typically where the "players" of the region gather and discuss what projects are happening, what's working or what is not.

How to get connected: The Move Together NY Project keeps an ongoing list of Mobility Managers throughout the region and State. For mobility managers near you, contact: Amber Simmons at as483@cornell.edu. This information may be posted and updated on the [Move Together NY website](#) sometime in late 2019 or early 2020.

There are also networking opportunities you should try and attend through NYPTA (New York Public Transit Association). The annual conference which is usually in October or November has many state mobility practitioners who attend as well as educational workshops. Also, the annual CTAA (Community Transportation Association of America) Expo, which rotate to various sites throughout the US, is an excellent networking opportunity. Both events are currently reimbursable through RTAP.

Schedule a meeting with your local Mobility Managers (or nearest) to learn about their programs and regions. They will become a good partner and resource of information,

Collaboration:

This is part of the DNA of Mobility managers. They listen and learn from the experience of other mobility managers and as we mentioned, this is often accomplished through networking.

New York has recently formed the New York State Association for Mobility Management (NYSAMM) to assist mobility professionals. This group is currently in its infancy, and has been created to be a valuable resource and voice for mobility practitioners throughout the state.

There are also informal networks generally formed from common, regional travel patterns.

4. Regulations

Transportation, especially publically funded transportation is highly regulated. Even if you are not directly involved with a transit agency, it will benefit you to know and understand the regulations that impact transportation and how it is funded. It's also advisable for you to understand the rules and regulations surrounding the primary sources of funding for Mobility Management in NY, which are 5310, 5311 and sometimes 5307 funds. These are FTA (Federal Transit Agency) grant programs. You can find how these programs are applied in NYS through the NYSDOT and FTA websites.

You should also review the STOA regulations. STOA = State Transit Operating Assistance. It is a source of funding for transit agencies that provides funding through both miles travelled and passenger counts. These regulation may be found on the NYSDOT website or [here: https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/public-transportation/funding-sources/STOA](https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/public-transportation/funding-sources/STOA)

Note, if your program is funded with other funds, you should learn the rules, reporting and any other requirements of the funding source.

5311 and 5310 reporting requirements for Mobility Management have recently been in flux. Currently, most forms require a narrative and reimbursement form be submitted to the state. These reports are due quarterly and have an annual report. Depending on your funding source and sponsoring agency, you may or may not be required to complete these reports and submit either directly to NYSDOT, to the County or MPO or other sponsoring entity.

More information regarding the primary NYSDOT/FTA funding mechanisms for mobility management are listed in the resources table in section 1.1.

5. Programming (when to create, collaborate or reinvent the wheel)

Once you become familiar with what's currently happening in your community, Mobility Managers seek to address community unmet transportation needs. Your influence or decisions will influence transportation options within your community:

- Need a new service
- Need to coordinate between services
- Need to both collaborate with other agencies and services
- Need to innovate with a totally new program/service

The first thing to remember, is do your homework. You do not want to reinvent the wheel and as innovative as you think your idea is, it's likely to have been done elsewhere. Look for both state projects or national projects that may be similar. You may be able to adjust your program and learn from the struggles of others to improve your iteration of a program or idea.

From the first module of NCMM's What is Mobility management, they demonstrate that mobility managers may be tasked with working on an individual, systemic or both levels. How do you get started?

Basic steps to solve transportation issues:

1. Begin with an understanding of customers' transportation needs
2. Gain an understanding of the providers and their capacity and needs
3. Brainstorm solutions from the range of possible services
4. Engage partners in providing the solution in a coordinated manner
5. Empower customers to connect to the solution
6. Work with a network of partners to ensure solution is sustainable
7. Solicit customer feedback so the solution is useful
8. This is an addition to the seven original listed in the NCMM site, when possible calculate the *Return on Investment (ROI)*. This is a good reportable and a documenting strategy to sustain the program (whether government, foundation or other funding).

("Mobility management basics", n.d.)

In addition, you must know the facts surrounding the transportation and if possible, political environment:

- A comprehensive knowledge of transportation resources in the area;
- An understanding of current and potential funding sources;
- Knowledge of customer eligibility criteria for specialized transportation services; and
- Basic knowledge of how transportation systems function.
- Has the community government (County, MPO, City, etc.) been supportive of transportation projects or what type of information will you need to provide to convince the governing bodies that the proposed project is worthwhile.

Tread lightly:

Non-profits, small volunteer groups, all serve niche markets and tend to be highly territorial. They struggle to support what they have and don't want to be lost or consumed in the interest of "efficiency". Respect their culture and offer to work with them, on their terms and then see how it may fit into your programming. This does not mean you accept all their requirements, if your program is providing them some funding, you can mandate reportables and expectations. But if they are not willing or able to provide the reportables, perhaps consider working with them at a different level that does not include financial support.

Mobility management is many times a patchwork of delicately stitched programs that come together to provide the quilt of transportation options for the community.

Reinventing the wheel: There will come a time that even with research, meetings, and trying to partner with other similar programs, it's discovered that the solution just won't work and it's time to make a better wheel that works for your community.

When that time comes, consider the following:

- Document the steps you take to develop the solution
- Whenever possible, create templates that will help others or your predecessor should you change positions
- Create benchmark evaluation times. For instance, build in a 6 month, 1 year and 2-year evaluation period to help determine program success or areas to improve.

- When you achieve success, share it with other mobility programs! Your solution, could be another community's solution.

6. Conclusion

The answer for new mobility managers is that there are no cookie cutter answers. Each community will need different services and will look to you to solve the gaps in transportation services.

Rely on your peers, make connections and innovate with both the immediate and future needs of your community in mind.

References:

What is mobility Management. (n.d.). Retrieved from nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org

Mobility Management Basics. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/e-learning/>