



## Mobility Manager Peer Roundtable: Guidance & Tips for Rural Travel Training Summary

November 12, 2025

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**Facilitator:** *Enjoli Dixon*, National RTAP

**Participants:** Rural mobility managers, travel trainers, transit directors, tribal transportation staff, state DOT representatives, driver trainers, and other rural transit professionals from across the country.

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### Discussion Overview

The November Mobility Management Roundtable, *Guidance & Tips for Rural Travel Training*, brought together rural and Tribal transit professionals to review the draft **Rural Travel Training Manual** and share real-world experiences implementing travel training in low-density communities.

Facilitated by *Enjoli Dixon*, the discussion focused on practical strategies for building rider confidence, tailored instruction, and accessible training tools aligned with National RTAP standards.

Participants represented agencies serving a diverse range of geographies—including frontier regions, small towns, and Tribal communities—providing insight into how travel training can expand access to jobs, healthcare, education, and social participation. The roundtable emphasized the importance of community partnerships, local flexibility, and data-driven needs assessments for improving rider independence across rural transit systems.

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### Review of the proposed chapters of the National RTAP Rural Travel Training Manual

Participants began by discussing the purpose and structure of the new manual, noting its value as a **nationally consistent yet locally adaptable** framework. Many highlighted that rural agencies often face challenges such as limited staffing, large geographic areas, and variable rider skill levels, making a practical, step-by-step manual especially useful.

The group agreed that the manual's focus on rider confidence, independence, and community-based mobility reflects what rural riders need most. Several agencies shared how they plan to adapt the

manual’s sections—including trip planning basics, safety, and ADA rights—to fit local circumstances or Tribal cultural contexts.

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### **Rider Needs & Assessment**

A major portion of the conversation centered on the **Rider Checklist** in the manual, which participants praised for helping identify barriers, knowledge gaps, and misconceptions (e.g., “transit is only for seniors”).

Participants shared the following insights:

- Some agencies currently gather information through informal conversations, but the checklist will help standardize and document assessments.
- Small groups reported that the checklist could support outreach through senior centers, Tribal programs, schools, and human service partners.
- Agencies appreciated the focus on understanding rider goals, not just logistics, to create more personalized training plans.

One participant noted that the checklist could also guide **funding narratives** by documenting community needs.

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### **Training Delivery, Tools & Local Practices**

Participants exchanged examples of hands-on training methods used in rural areas, including:

- Full practice rides to important local destinations
- Small group travel training with elder services or Tribal youth programs
- “Ride-along ambassadors” who accompany new riders
- Printed maps, pocket schedules, booking instructions, and ADA tip sheets
- Partnerships with libraries, schools, and community health workers

Many emphasized the need for **simple, visual materials** that work well in communities with limited internet access. Several participants expressed interest in adding customizable templates and scripts to the national toolkit.

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### **Changing Perceptions & Community Messaging**

The roundtable discussed strategies for addressing misconceptions about rural transit. Participants shared messaging approaches that have helped position transit as a service for everyone:

- Storytelling and rider success profiles
- Using local ambassadors respected in the community
- Emphasizing cost savings, safety, and reliability
- Partnering with trusted organizations for outreach

This led to a conversation about how cultural perception—especially in Tribal or frontier communities—plays a major role in travel training success.

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## **Evaluation & Measuring Impact**

Participants discussed evaluation tools such as pre- and post-training surveys, informal assessments, and follow-up calls. The group discussed indicators that suggest a rider has achieved travel independence, including:

- Successfully completing solo trips
- Calling to ask more advanced questions
- Demonstrating confidence navigating schedules, booking, or requesting stops
- Using transit for multiple trip purposes (not just medical trips)

Agencies expressed interest in shared evaluation templates to standardize reporting and support grant applications.

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## **Agency Example Shared**

The group reviewed the model developed by the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) in Illinois, which offers a structured “Rural Travel Training” program. The CCRPC outlines a three-step process (planning, presentation, follow-up) and provides agencies with checklists, agenda templates, travel “fun-trip” logistics, and evaluation tools. ([Champaign County RPC](#)) Participants appreciated seeing how CCRPC formalizes steps such as selecting co-facilitators, planning field travel, and following up within 48 hours to support new riders.

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## **Implementation, Partnerships & Next Steps**

Participants concluded by discussing how they plan to adopt or integrate the manual locally. Key ideas included:

- Launching pilot travel training sessions with partner agencies
- Working with Tribal elders, health clinics, schools, or disability service organizations
- Using the checklist as a core intake tool
- Incorporating the manual into driver and volunteer training
- Exploring train-the-trainer models and peer-mentor networks for local capacity
- Building regional partnerships across transit, health, education, and social services to broaden reach

Agencies also identified technical assistance needs, such as train-the-trainer sessions, peer examples, and opportunities to share program templates.

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