



INDIANA DISPATCH

*A Newsletter for Indiana's
Transportation Professionals*



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INDOT

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CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL MASTER AND ELITE MASTER DRIVERS!

INDOT Office of Transit would like to congratulate the Indiana Transit Drivers on their accomplishment of their Master Driver Award and/or Elite Master Driver Award. This is a program is a part of the Indiana RTAP Program intended to recognize drivers for their unique skill sets and dedication, and works with all 5311 federally funded providers. What is 5311 you ask? The 5311 federal funded program is formally known as Formula Grants for Rural Areas and provides federal funds to states and federally recognized Indian tribes to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000. The program funds capital expenses, operating costs, and planning for services that enhance access to employment, healthcare, shopping, and other essential services for rural residents. INDOT recognizes the need for the funds in all of Indiana's communities, and that these drivers go above and beyond to keep our citizens around the state safe. The Master Driver and Elite Master Driver program includes qualifications you have to meet to reach Master Driver status and then additional criteria for the Elite Master Driver status. See below what these qualifications are.



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INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Driving Indiana's Economic Growth

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL MASTER AND ELITE MASTER DRIVERS!

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Master Driver & Elite Master Driver Award Program

Master Driver Award Qualifications: In order for a driver to achieve the Master Driver Award program status, drivers are required to attend the four core trainings (listed below), plus two other RTAP e-learning or RTAP training modules in two years to receive an award certificate and patch.

Elite Master Driver Award Qualifications: The Elite Master Driver Award will require prior completion of the Master Driver program, which can still be obtained by simply attending the four-core training plus two other RTAP training modules or e-learning programs. Once Master Driver status is achieved, each driver must then maintain, per INDOT requirements, the four core RTAP training modules to achieve the Elite Master status:

- ⇒ Wheelchair Securement,
- ⇒ Defensive Driving,
- ⇒ Pre-Trip Inspections, and
- ⇒ Emergency Procedures/Evacuation

Drivers must receive a score of no less than 90% on each class test and complete three other RTAP training classes, which may include e-learning programs:

- ⇒ Customer Service Disability Awareness,
- ⇒ Driver Fatigue/Stress Management,
- ⇒ Dealing with Difficult People, or
- ⇒ Safety and Security.

Drivers have five years to complete the Elite Master Driver Program and cannot have a chargeable accident during that time. Upon successful completion of the program, a certificate and patch will be awarded to each driver recognizing him or her as an Elite Master Driver. Finally, to maintain Elite Master Driver Status and receive additional patches, drivers will be required to repeat the core training modules every five years and receive no less than 90% on core class tests.

Drivers receiving the Master Driver or Elite Master Driver award are invited to attend the annual INCOST conference awards dinner. Drivers are recognized at this dinner for their dedication and exemplary status and provided their certificate and the appropriate patch for their status. Drivers who are unable to attend the annual awards ban-

quet will receive their certificate and patches via regular mail.

Please help us congratulate the following drivers from all around the state of Indiana.

Community Services of Starke County

- Myers, Patrick – Elite Master Driver
- Shadrix, Gerald – Elite Master Driver

Fayette County Public Transit

- Best-Pollitt, Yolanda – Master Driver

First Chance Center

- Beasley, Lisa – Elite Master Driver
- Curry, Calvin – Master Driver
- Mattingly, Crystal – Elite Master Driver
- McCord, Stephen – Elite Master Driver
- Roach, Melissa – Master Driver
- Roberts, Deborah – Master Driver
- Russell, Chad – Elite Master Driver
- Wolfe, Nancy – Elite Master Driver

Franklin County Public Transportation

- Bell Jr., Robert – Master Driver
- Frank, Lawrence – Elite Master Driver

Fulton County Transportation

- Stevens, Brenda – Master Driver

Huntingburg Transit System

- Clark, April – Master Driver
- Craig, Bradley – Elite Master Driver
- Lange, Deanna – Elite Master Driver

Jasper County Community Services

- Budreau, Chelsea – Master Driver
- Dykhuizen, Sarah – Master Driver
- Hill, Shelly – Master Driver
- Wilson, Laci – Elite Master Driver

Kosciusko Area Bus Service (KABS)

- Covert, Steve – Master Driver
- Smith, Karina – Master Driver

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CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL MASTER AND ELITE MASTER DRIVERS!

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

Living Well in Wabash County COA, Inc.

- Jeffries, Ralph – Master Driver
- Novak, Donald – Master Driver
- Ravenscroft, Jeff- Master Driver

Newton County Community Services

- Drain, Trisha – Elite Master Driver
- Kunis, Jimmie – Elite Master Driver
- Pierson Jr., Thomas (Allen) – Master Driver
- Von Tobel, Virgil – Elite Master Driver
- Wilson, Dionne – Master Driver

Noble County Council on Aging

- Berhalter, Toni – Master Driver
- Cherry, Paul – Elite Master Driver
- Graber, Ervin – Elite Master Driver
- Plummer, Rachel – Master Driver
- Tucker, Nila – Master Driver

Pathfinder Services

- Baker, Frederick – Master Driver
- Bushman, Jeffrey – Master Driver
- Cooper, Craig – Master Driver
- Gunyon, Ronald – Master Driver
- Layton, Dawn – Master Driver
- Robertson, John – Master Driver
- Stevens, Ronald – Master Driver
- Trent, Sammy – Master Driver
- Zerfas, William – Master Driver

Shelby Senior Services

- Hall-Beyer, Easter – Elite Master Driver
- Schrank, Holly – Elite Master Driver

Thrive West Central

- Osborn, Bobbi – Master Driver
- Tribble, Matthew – Master Driver

Wells County Council on Aging

- Aschliman, Lisa – Master Driver
- Burns, Kathy – Elite Master Driver
- Plumlee, Orval – Elite Master Driver
- Reidenbach, Michael – Elite Master Driver
- Reineck, Jerry – Elite Master Driver

Whitley County Council on Aging

- Gates, Deborah – Master Driver
- Miller, Lori – Master Driver
- Ross, Sarah – Master Driver
- Smith, Thomas – Master Driver
- Starry, Amanda – Master Driver

YMCA VanGo Public Transportation

- Barnett, Stewart – Elite Master Driver
- Bilskie, Larry – Master Driver
- Bishop, Randy – Master Driver
- Crock, Robert – Master Driver
- Hutchinson, Randy – Master Driver
- Kays, Mona – Master Driver
- Kellams, Brian – Elite Master Driver
- Pinnick, Rebecca – Elite Master Driver
- Yochum, Edward – Elite Master Driver



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE MASTER DRIVER AND ELITE MASTER DRIVER PROGRAM, PLEASE VISIT THE INRTAP WEBSITE:

[INRTAP Website](#)

[MDA/EMDA INFORMATION](#)

DRIVER OVERSIGHT IS A MUST!!

Small urban, rural, public, and even specialized transportation programs have struggled for years to find good quality and reliable applicants to fill the driver's seat for providing transportation services. This trend continues and has resulted in some transportation programs lowering the standards in order to have a pool of applicants to choose from. This has also led to some transportation programs being more lenient regarding policy enforcement and addressing performance issues when they exist.

Transportation programs and managers should be conducting regular oversight of driver performance in the field, as well as reviewing pre-trip inspection reports and other required documentation for completeness and accuracy. Passenger complaints should be fully investigated and all drivers should be advised of any changes in policy or protocol relative to the corrective action remedy.

Ghost rider initiatives to evaluate transit vehicle operation and customer service can provide real world assessments of lift operations and securement techniques to help determine adherence to proper training procedures. Dispatch and management have the ability to know when and where drivers are providing services to persons with disabilities, and those that utilize a mobility aid. Periodic in-field assessments of a driver's performance should be conducted to identify training needs, assess the driver's adherence to training protocols and address failure to perform when identified. In reviewing the pre-trip inspection report, managers and supervisors should be evaluating the following:

- Are they complete?

- Are they accurate with the condition of the vehicle?

Periodic management inspection should occur to determine accuracy of the pre-trip reports.

Managers and supervisors should also be evaluating the smoothness of operation and adherence to traffic laws and the rules of the road. Ghost rider or mystery rider observations are one way of conducting this performance evaluation. Transit providers have utilized known and trusted passengers, as well as staff from neighboring transit programs to complete these initiatives. INDOT now requires that driver observation be conducted and that these observations be uploaded into BlackCat to demonstrate this requirement has been met. Every driver should receive an evaluation based on their performance annually, at a minimum. A sample of the mystery rider observation form is included below, and includes the following elements to be evaluated:

- ◆People skills and communication with passengers (customer service)
- ◆Policy enforcement and sensitivity
- ◆Passenger assistance
- ◆Assistance with passengers who use assistive devices
- ◆Assistance with bags and packages (per agency policy)
- ◆Assistance with persons with disabilities and the elderly
- ◆Assistance with persons who use mobility aids

In addition to in-service evaluations of driver performance, adherence to lift operations and securement training protocol should also be evaluated annually, at a minimum. Indiana RTAP offers a manager/supervisor PAT training annually to provide managers and supervisors with the training needed to complete initial new hire PAT training until the individual can attend an RTAP PAT training. This training also provides direction to attendees on how to evaluate driver performance of the trained tasks. A complete evaluation of the performance of these duties should be properly documented. A copy of the proficiency demonstration form used by RTAP training is provided to participants of the manager/supervisor training for completing oversight activities, and a copy is provided with this article below.

SAMPLE MYSTERY RIDER OBSERVATION FORM

MYSTERY RIDER OBSERVATION FORM

DATE: _____ LOCATION: _____ TIME: _____ BUS NUMBER: _____ OBSERVER: _____

Operator Courtesy and Customer Service Acumen

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Did the operator announce the stops prior to arrival? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 2. If no, was it because the announcements were automated? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 3. Did the operator greet passengers during boarding? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 4. Did the operator engage in parting conversation or say good-bye upon debarking? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |

Revenue/Fare Collection

- | | |
|--|--|
| 5. Was a fare box available on the bus? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 6. If not, what did the operator do when you handed them the fare? | |
| Comments _____ | |

Accurate Information Provided to Customers

- | | |
|---|--|
| 7. Pretend that as a new rider you need information about the bus service, including a schedule if on a fixed route. Did the operator provide a brochure that was available on the bus? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 8. If not, did the operator explain how to obtain bus service/schedule information? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| Comments _____ | |

Vehicle Appearance

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 9. Was the bus clean? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| Comments _____ | |

Comfort of ride

- | | |
|---|--|
| 10. If hot weather was the air conditioning in working order? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 11. If cold weather was the heater in working order? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |

Operational Safety

- | | |
|---|--|
| 12. Was a fire extinguisher on board the bus? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 13. Was a first aid kit on board the bus? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 14. Was a bloodborne pathogen kit on board the bus? (usually a cardboard box) | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 15. Were emergency exits clearly identified? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 16. Were wheelchair securements put away when not in use? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 17. Did the operator employ safe and defensive driving skills? i.e. (obey traffic laws) | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| Comments _____ | |

ADA Compliance

- | | |
|---|--|
| 18. If boarding a person with a disability, did operator use safe lift operation techniques? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| Comments _____ | |
| 19. If boarding a person with a disability, did operator use correct (PAT) passenger assistance techniques? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| Comments _____ | |

On Time Performance

- | | |
|---|--|
| 20. Did the bus arrive according to scheduled time? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |
| 21. Did the bus depart according to scheduled time? | YES ☐ NO ☐ |

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SAMPLE PASSENGER ASSISTANCE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FORM

Passenger Assistance Performance Evaluation

Name of Trainee: _____ System: _____

Name of Trainer: _____ Location of Training: _____

Skill Categories: **Lift Operations and Securement**

Date: _____

Specific Task	Rating*					Comments	Ins. Init
	T	1	2	3	N		
Assisting onto the lift platform							
Raising the lift							
Assisting off the lift platform into bay							
Position Mobility Device in Securement Location on Vehicle							
Set the Wheel Locks (Power Off)							
Rear Securement							
Front Securement							
Lap Belt Position							
Shoulder Belt Position							
Test Overall Securement							
Assisting onto the lift platform							
Lowering the lift							
Assisting off the lift platform							
Passenger Communication (All tasks)							
Body Mechanics (All tasks)							

***Rating Definitions:**

T: Can perform without supervision with initiative and adaptability to special problem situations and can lead others in performing it.

1: Can perform satisfactorily without assistance and/or supervision.

2: Can perform satisfactorily but requires periodic supervision and/or assistance.

3: Can perform some parts of the skill satisfactorily, but required instruction and supervision to perform the entire skill.

N: Has some knowledge and limited experience, but not sufficient for participation in a work environment.

General Comments:

PASS ☐ FAIL ☐ 30 Day Evaluation Before _____ ☐

Trainee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Instructor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Oversight of driver performance should be evaluated frequently enough to be included as a part of the driver's annual performance review. Annual reviews should address the following:

- ◆Complaints and corrective actions
- ◆Issues with failure to follow training, procedures or policy
- ◆Excellence in performance
- ◆Copies of evaluations conducted

Applying oversight and evaluation processes consistently and equally will significantly improve employee performance and increase the quality of service provided to the community. Failure to identify and address poor service or behavior can encourage others to perform to that same standard, which negatively impacts the quality of services provided, the community being served and the ridership for the transit program. It is also equally important to acknowledging good service, which will foster a desire to improve performance and not just with the employee being acknowledged.

DRIVERS PUSHING POWER CHAIRS DO OR DON'T?

Is an operator in their day-to-day provision of services required to manually push a powered mobility aid that ceases functioning while providing transit service for a passenger?

A transit operator is required to provide a reasonable level of passenger assistance in the performance of their duties. If a rider requests that the driver manually push their powered mobility aid because it has experienced a mechanical failure or loss of power due to drained batteries, this would position the operator to exceed this requirement.

This is considered an attendant-type service, for which the agency is not required to provide a PCA or attendant-type services.

For the driver, the general requirements for the provision of what constitutes a reasonable level of assistance may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(FTA Circular 4710.1) Chapter 2

Required assistance, which can be provided by **vehicle operators**, conductors, or station attendants, includes acts such as **deploying and stowing lifts and ramps, securing riders' wheelchairs, and assisting with seat belts and shoulder harnesses.**

(FTA Circular 4710.1) Section 2.4.1. Accommodating Riders Using Wheelchairs

Vehicle operators are not required to assume the controls of power wheelchairs to assist riders with boarding vehicles.

Providing assistance with a power wheelchair falls under the category of attendant-type services, which the regulations do not require.

Moreover, it would be unreasonable to expect a driver to know how to operate each rider's powered mobility device. While placing a power wheelchair in freewheeling mode may not be difficult, controlling it is a different matter.

Further, two additional reasons have been cited for denying a rider's reasonable modification request relevant to this topic:

(FTA Circular 4710.1) Chapter 2

1. Granting the request for a modification **would fundamentally alter the provider's services**, Section 37.169 (c).
2. Granting the request for a modification **would create a direct threat to the health or safety of others** (e.g., a **request that would require a driver to engage in a highly hazardous activity to assist a passenger**, Section 37.169 (c) (2).

A direct threat is one that cannot be removed by a modification of the system's practices, policies, or procedures. So, providing this type of service by manually pushing a powerchair would fundamentally alter how the transit system offers its services and exposes the driver to the direct threat/highly hazardous activity component. Thus, it creates the potential for bodily harm and liability to both the transit driver and the company.

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DRIVERS PUSHING POWER CHAIRS DO OR DON'T? (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

Finally, RTAP has provided the following FTA supplementary excerpt regarding a rider's complaint against Niagara Frontier Transit Authority Company and the follow-up FTA response, to provide greater clarity on this topic:

Niagara Frontier Transit Authority, Buffalo, NY, 4-29-10

Re: FTA Complaint Number 10-0172

Dear [name withheld]:

This letter responds to your complaint against the Niagara Frontier Transit Authority (NFTA) alleging discrimination on the basis of disability.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Office of Civil Rights is responsible for civil rights compliance and monitoring, which includes ensuring that providers of public transportation comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Department of Transportation's (DOT) implementing regulations at 49 CFR Parts 27, 37, and 38.

In the FTA complaint investigation process, we analyze allegations for possible ADA deficiencies by the transit provider. If FTA identifies what may be a violation, we first attempt to provide technical assistance to assist the public transit provider in complying with the ADA.

If FTA cannot resolve apparent violations of the ADA or the DOT ADA regulations by voluntary means, formal enforcement proceedings may be initiated against the public transit provider, which may result in the termination of federal funds. FTA also may refer the matter to the U.S. Department of Justice for enforcement.

Each response is developed based on the specific facts and circumstances at issue. A determination resulting from a review of these facts is not intended to express an opinion as to the overall ADA compliance of that transit provider. Specifically, your complaint alleged that:

- On February 26, 2010, you asked NFTA for a reasonable accommodation under the ADA. Specifically, you asked NFTA to have their drivers operate your power wheelchair on the ramp since you must board the lift separately because your wheelchair exceeds the 600 lb design load required for a lift to accommodate a common wheelchair while occupied.

Relevant ADA Requirements

Under 49 CFR §37.165(b) of the DOT ADA regulations, all common wheelchairs and their users shall be transported in the entity's vehicles or other conveyances.

Section 37.3 of the same CFR defines a "common wheelchair" as a mobility aid device that does not exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length measured two inches above the ground, and does not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied. The design load of the lift of the entity's vehicles or other conveyances shall be at least 600 pounds. 49 CFR § 38.23(b)

The 600-pound specification is the minimum that a vehicle is required to accommodate; transit providers may decide to transport heavier devices if they have suitable equipment. If the transit provider's fleet only allows the 600-pound ADA requirement to be accommodated, FTA suggests to transit providers that they allow people with disabilities to board separately from their mobility device (if the rider is able to board separately) to come in under the 600-pound requirement.

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DRIVERS PUSHING POWER CHAIRS

DO OR DON'T?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

Under 49 CFR § 37.173:

The DOT ADA regulations also require that each public or private entity ensure that personnel are trained to proficiency, as appropriate to their duties, so that they operate vehicles and equipment safely and properly assist and treat individuals with disabilities who use the service in a respectful and courteous way, with appropriate attention to the differences among individuals with disabilities. This includes training personnel to accommodate the different types of common wheelchairs.

Under 49 CFR § 37.165 (f)

The entity's personnel shall also assist individuals with disabilities with the use of securement systems, ramps, and lifts. "On a vehicle which uses a ramp for entry, the driver may have to assist in pushing a manual wheelchair up the ramp (particularly where the ramp slope is relatively steep)."

49 CFR Section 37.165 App. D. The interpretive guidance found in Appendix D **specifically addresses manual wheelchairs, not power chairs**. Moreover, attendant-type services are not required. 49 CFR Section 37.5 App. D.

Conclusion

After reviewing all of the submitted materials, the information provided does not support a finding that NFTA violated the provisions of the DOT ADA regulations. First, the information you provided indicates that you were approved for ADA complementary paratransit service on or about May 13, 2009.

By letter dated April 27, 2009, NFTA informed you that they would not be able to transport your wheelchair because it exceeded the 600lb design load required for a lift to accommodate a common wheelchair while occupied. NFTA's Eligibility Coordinator, Christine Farrow, did give you the option of traveling with a PCA, who can operate your wheelchair separately for you.

Under 49 CFR 37.131(c)(3), a personal care attendant is not charged a fare for complementary paratransit service, so there would be no difference in cost to you for your trip.

Providing assistance with a power wheelchair falls under the category of attendant-type services, which are not required under DOT regulations.

Moreover, it would be unreasonable to expect a driver to know how to operate each rider's powered mobility device. While placing a powerchair in freewheeling mode may not be difficult, controlling it is a different matter; not only does the weight make it difficult to maneuver, but disengaging the motors also disengages the brakes.

This concludes our processing of this matter, and no further action will be taken. While FTA's decision in your case is administratively final, it does not prevent you from pursuing this matter privately in the appropriate court. If you have any questions regarding our determination, please contact me or Hyacinth Clarke of my staff at (202) 366-7142 or via e-mail at hyacinth.clarke@dot.gov. Any further correspondence should reference FTA Complaint No. 10-0172.

Sincerely,
John R. Day
Acting ADA Team Leader
Office of Civil Rights

In summation, in the ADA context, transit drivers are not required to provide "attendant-type services" and take on the role typically provided by a PCA by pushing occupants in powered mobility aids that have stopped functioning.

DRIVERS PUSHING POWER CHAIRS

DO? or DON'T?

DRIVERS TRAINED TO PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENT *SHOULD PASSENGERS EXPECT ANYTHING LESS?*

RTAP's passenger assistance training (PAT) is a recognized industry standard, helping transit systems and drivers achieve the highest safety standards, aligning with federal regulatory criteria and best practices.

PAT training helps to ensure the well-being of passengers, particularly those with disabilities, which would include, but may not be limited to, the following: customer service, professionalism, fitness for duty, ADA compliance, accessibility for the disabled, disability etiquette, personal care attendants, service animals, transport of medical oxygen, performing lift/ ramp operations, and proper application of wheelchair securement processes.

Your agency's passenger assistance is governed by ADA requirements, which means 5310/ 5311 INDOT programs must meet ADA standards.

Thus, by equipping staff with comprehensive safety skills and knowledge that meet compliance, transit systems can significantly reduce the risk of accidents and injuries, thereby lowering passenger bodily harm and organizational liability, and enhancing the overall customer service delivery experience.

Why are drivers required to complete PAT training?

49 CFR Section 37.173 states: Each public or private entity that operates a fixed route or demand-responsive system shall ensure that personnel are **trained to proficiency**, as appropriate to their duties, so that they operate vehicles and equipment safely and properly.

Assisting and treating individuals with disabilities who use the service in a respectful and courteous way, with appropriate attention to the differences among individuals with disabilities.

49 CFR Section 37.173 states: A well-trained workforce is essential in ensuring that the accessibility-related equipment and accommodations required by the ADA actually result in the delivery of good transportation service to individuals with disabilities. The utility of training was recognized by Congress as well. (See S. Rept. 100-116 at 48.)

At the same time, we believe that training should be conducted efficiently and effectively, with appropriate flexibility allowed to the organizations that must carry it out. Each transportation provider is to design a training pro-

gram that suits the needs of its particular operation.

While we are confident of this approach, we are mindful that the apparent lack of training has been a source of complaint to FTA and transit providers. Good training is difficult and it is essential. Several points of this section deserve emphasis.

First, the requirements for training apply to private, as well as to public providers of demand-responsive and fixed-route service. Training is just as necessary for the driver of a taxicab, a hotel shuttle, or a tour bus as it is for a driver in an FTA-funded city bus system.

Second, training must be to proficiency. **(Be advised, IN-DOT requires PAT training every 2 years.)**

Every employee of a transportation provider who is involved with service to persons with disabilities must have been trained so that he or she knows what needs to be done to provide the service in the right way. When it comes to providing service to individuals with disabilities, ignorance is no excuse for failure.

While there is no specific requirement for recurrent or refresher training, there is an obligation to ensure that, at any given time, employees are trained to proficiency.

An employee who has forgotten what they were told in past training sessions, so that he or she does not know what needs to be done to serve individuals with disabilities, does not meet the standard of being trained to proficiency.

Third, training must be appropriate to the duties of each employee. A paratransit dispatcher must know how to use a TDD and enough about various disabilities to know what sort of vehicle to dispatch.

A bus driver must know how to operate lifts and securement devices properly. A mechanic who works on lifts must know how to maintain them. Cross-training, while useful in some instances, is not required, so long as each employee is trained to proficiency in what he or she does with respect to service to individuals with disabilities.

Should passengers expect anything less?

5311 PROGRAM SITE VISITS

INDOT Project Managers are continuing to schedule general site visits to transit systems throughout the program. Site visits continue to be used as an additional opportunity for INDOT Managers to provide specific technical assistance and one-on-one training as needed for increased understanding of program requirements. INDOT Project Managers will contact each transit agency prior to each visit to prepare for any specific topics of discussion or program requirements the agency would like INDOT to cover during the visit. All questions related to site visits should be submitted to the assigned Project Manager for the agency.

CY2026 SECTION 5311/5339 GRANT APPLICATIONS

All grant applications and vehicle awards requested have been unofficially approved. All applications are undergoing final review and any need to correct or provide additional information will be requested by INDOT. INDOT anticipates all applications will be officially approved by September 30.

CY2026 SECTION 5311/5339 CONTRACTS

Once all grant applications are approved, INDOT will initiate the state contracts for local signatures. Amy Craft continues to be the primary INDOT Project Manager responsible for drafting and routing all contracts through for local, and state signatures and all questions related to the process should be submitted to Amy at acraft1@indot.in.gov.

CY2026 SECTION 5311/5339 PURCHASE ORDERS

INDOT will begin drafting and executing all Purchase Orders upon all contracts being routed through the State Contracts Management (SCM) System. Purchase Orders must be executed prior to any federal or state funding reimbursements taking place in 2026. Once Purchase Orders are fully executed, INDOT will upload both the state contracts and purchase orders to the BlackCat Management System and notify each recipient of the authorization to seek reimbursement.

STATE QUANTITY PURCHASE AGREEMENT

INDOT is currently in the process of drafting and preparing a new Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit bids for the state paratransit van QPA. All 5311 subrecipients procure vehicles off this QPA with federal 5339 funding. INDOT anticipates vendor selection to occur in the fall and in time for contracts and purchase orders to be executed to allow for procurement of these vehicles. INDOT will notify subrecipients if there is a need to revise their CY2026 Grant Application and all vehicle budgets that are included within those applications. Any questions related to the state QPA should be submitted to Todd Jennings at tjennings@indot.in.gov.

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CY2026 SECTION 5311/5339 COMPLIANCE REVIEWS

The following subrecipients are due for their next Section 5311/5339 Compliance Review conducted by INDOT and RLS and Associates. All subrecipients should anticipate an initial contact from INDOT Office of Transit to occur in January 2026. All information specific to the conduct of these reviews will be provided at that time. Any questions related to the state QPA should be submitted to Todd Jennings at tjennings@indot.in.gov.

Boone County	Harrison County
Brown County	Hendricks County
City of Bedford	LaGrange County
City of Huntingburg	Miami County
City of New Castle	Orange County

Important Documents: All subrecipients must ensure they are uploading and maintaining all critical program documents within the Important Documents Module of the BlackCat Management System. Subrecipients must continue to reference the Important Documents Review Guide, and BlackCat Dashboard to ensure they are current with all documents required. As a reminder, most documents currently being requested within the module are only required to be uploaded if/when an agency amends or revises any document currently in place. Although there are specific documents that are required to be uploaded at specific times, those documents will be identified by INDOT and communicated on the Dashboard at the beginning of each month. All subrecipients are expected to reference both the Dashboard and Important Documents Review Guide to ensure compliance with this requirement. Please contact your INDOT Project Manager with any questions.

INDOT TRANSIT DIRECTOR LAUNCHES STATEWIDE LISTENING TOUR

Larry Buckel, Transit Office Director at the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), is hitting the road—literally. Over the coming months, Larry plans to visit each of Indiana’s public transit systems to meet with transit managers and key staff, tour facilities, and engage in open dialogue about operations.

These visits are not audits or compliance reviews. Instead, they’re designed to foster collaboration and transparency. Larry is eager to hear directly from transit professionals across the state, gaining insights into day-to-day operations and gathering feedback on INDOT’s grant programs.

Given the scope of this initiative, coordination will be key. If your system has preferred dates, upcoming events, or ideal times for a visit, you're encouraged to contact Larry directly at lbuckel@indot.in.gov. He will follow up to arrange scheduling. If no preferences are provided, Larry will reach out to coordinate a visit that works for your team.

Larry’s statewide tour reflects INDOT’s ongoing commitment to strengthening public transportation through partnership and dialogue. Your insights are invaluable in shaping the future of transit across Indiana.

Thank you for your continued dedication to serving Hoosiers and advancing mobility statewide.

2025 INCOST CONFERENCE

IN~~COST~~



2025 INCOST CONFERENCE

The 2025 INCOST Conference will be held on October 8-10, 2025 at the Brown County Inn in Nashville, Indiana. Please check out the INCOST [page](#) on the INRTAP website for more information and registration.

For more information, please contact BethAnn Knots at the City of Columbus 812-376-2505, ext. 707 or bknotts@columbus.in.gov.

IN COST MEMBERSHIP

IN COST would like to encourage all agencies to join INCOST! There are multiple benefits to being an INCOST member and we encourage you to reach out to other agencies (both 5310 and 5311) to join as well! The cost of an INCOST membership is only \$75 a year. If interested, please provide the following information:

AGENCY NAME:
AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE
AGENCY ADDRESS
EMAIL ADDRESS
AGENCY TELEPHONE
WEBSITE ADDRESS

You can mail your check made payable to INCOST to:

Trisha Persinger, Treasurer
Union County Council on Aging & Aged, Inc.
PO Box 333
Liberty, IN 47353
765-458-5500
withamtrisha_ucaa@yahoo.com