

One-Call/One-Click System Implementation: Common Stumbling Blocks

This summary provides an overview of common “stumbling blocks” to one-call/one-click (OC/OC) system implementation. This information is based on OC/OC training conducted by the National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) during fall 2020 and the collection of project examples for the [OC/OC Resource Center](#). This summary is provided based on informal observations and did not involve a rigorous research approach. NCMM is providing this information to be used by organizations as they embark on, or expand, their OC/OC system efforts.

Lack of clear vision and action steps

OC/OC system efforts require a clear vision of why the OC/OC effort is needed and what it will accomplish. The vision will be different for each leading organization and its partners, if any are any involved, since each OC/OC system is unique. Regardless, understanding the “why” is critical; not only does it provide clear reasoning for the effort, but it can also help establish the right direction if an effort gets off course. In addition, action steps are needed to help chart the course from the present to the future vision. These can be general steps but, at a minimum, they should guide the organizations involved through concrete actions to take that result in the OC/OC system that is needed. In short, those involved in the OC/OC effort should engage in a planning process, which can be basic, substantial, or robust, to prepare for the OC/OC journey. Moving forward with an OC/OC effort with little or no planning can be a stumbling block later when the organizations involved realize they did not think through what it would take to reach the end and what they might encounter along the way.

Lack of general staff and partner agreement on path forward

As a part of the process of developing a clear vision and action steps, the various staff members should be involved, so that the vision and action steps are “co-created”—developed together to foster a joint effort. If partner organizations are involved, they too should be included in the process. They may be part of a single vision and action step setting process, or the process could have two steps, first the leading organization and then the partner organizations included later to add, modify, and join the effort. When an OC/OC effort progresses, but the professionals involved are not on the same page about how to best implement the effort, stumbling blocks will emerge.

Waiting for perfect conditions

Some organizations realize the benefits that an OC/OC system could offer, but they convince themselves that they’d need a transformational event to take place first. A transformational event could be a major grant award, a partner agency taking the lead with their own OC/OC effort, or some other event. Regardless of the event, the organization may be hindered by their own assumption that they can’t begin an OC/OC effort until this event has taken place. What happens in some cases is that the anticipated and transformational event never occurs, and as a result, the

organization never even attempts to begin an OC/OC effort. OC/OC efforts can start very small and build over time as more resources allow. Action steps are pinpointed as a part of the planning process and typically involve phases, so that the foundations are put in place first—even starting very modestly. While timing is certainly important, an organization should try to avoid their own mental stumbling block in thinking that they are not able to begin until the conditions are perfect.

Disagreement among regional organizations

OC/OC efforts often involve many organizations, particularly a group of organizations that share transportation responsibilities across a broad geographic area. OC/OC efforts that arise within one organization, without involving the others, can come into a stumbling block later since ultimately, they will need to reconcile their visions and action steps to become a joint effort—at least to some extent. There can still be a leading organization, but the other organizations may become implicitly involved; how their services and operations will change tend to become built-in aspects of the OC/OC effort. The earlier all organizations in a geographic area can become involved, the earlier the impact of this stumbling block is reduced.

Downplaying the importance of group alignment

Since OC/OC efforts often have technology at the center of the effort, other considerations have a tendency to fall to the wayside. This can be a significant stumbling block, because in fact, OC/OC efforts are really about people coming to agreement about how to approach specific transportation-related needs in a certain geographic area. The decision-making process the organizations and professionals go through to decide how to approach the effort is the core of an OC/OC effort. Getting all of the people involved into alignment about the vision and action steps to take for OC/OC implementation is often the top challenge of an OC/OC effort. When the people and decision-making aspect gets put on a lower priority level, often below the technology to use, the group often encounters a stumbling block that must be overcome in order to get the effort back on track.

Developing viable efforts considering systemic challenges

OC/OC efforts must often operate along with systemic challenges. Examples of systemic challenges include underfunded transportation services, transportation services with overlapping service areas with little or no coordination, transportation services that serve different types of passengers and struggle to serve them all equally, and so on. To some extent, OC/OC efforts can help, if not to remove the systemic challenge, to at least improve the situation. However, OC/OC efforts can become extremely discouraging to organizations when they cannot fix all of the systemic challenges, and in fact, it seems as if there is no solution, OC/OC system-related or not, to meet all the challenges at hand. The best thing to do in this situation is to try and identify the different systemic challenges, one-by-one, and figure out if there is anything in the organization's power to change. Some solutions might be OC/OC related; some might not be OC/OC related at all. Further, an organization may come to the conclusion that some systemic challenges cannot be changed at the current time. Taking an honest look at all these factors can help develop realistic plans for an OC/OC effort, one that improves what it can, while acknowledging that there are some things it cannot change. Otherwise, an organization will experience a stumbling block by simply feeling the effort is always falling short—when in reality it might be accomplishing something that is still an important piece of the overall puzzle.

Failure to maximize available resources

For some OC/OC efforts, it seems that a major grant is the only way to accomplish what is needed. And while that may be true for some, it is not true for all. Some OC/OC efforts are entirely internal to an organization and its partners, funded through dedicated funds and staffed with their own staff without consultants. It can become a stumbling block for some organizations to assume that without a major grant, they cannot begin their OC/OC effort. Organizations should consider the smallest part of an OC/OC effort that would reap some benefit, and consider that as a first step. At the same time, they'll need to identify how to build on top of that first step to expand the reach of the effort over the years. It could be that the first step is funded with dedicated funds and that the professionals already working for the organization and its partner organizations have the skills needed to move the effort forward. To avoid this stumbling block, an organization should think broadly, openly, and creatively about its targets and available resources.