Competency Implementation Guide for the Practice of Mobility Management

The National Center for Mobility Management

2017

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About the National Center for Mobility Management

The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) is funded through a cooperative agreement with the Federal Transit Administration. The mission of the Center is to facilitate communities to adopt transportation strategies and mobility options that empower people to live independently, and advance health, economic vitality, self-sufficiency, and community.

The Center's primary activities support Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grantees, mobility managers, and partners in adopting proven, sustainable, and replicable transportation coordination, mobility management, and one call–one click transportation information practices. NCMM provides assistance to communities through NCMM Regional Liaisons, a peer-to-peer network, short-term technical assistance, web resources, and one-on-one phone and e-mail support. NCMM staff deliver in-person and virtual trainings, a monthly e-newsletter, webinars, and conference calls while also disseminating descriptions of relevant promising practices, including "snapshots" of a particular topic or trend as well as a more in-depth database of practices. NCMM staff collaborate with mobility management practitioners across the country and align and support the goals and activities of the FTA's Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM).

NCMM is operated through a consortium of three national organizations—the American Public Transportation Association, the Community Transportation Association of America, and Easterseals.

Developing this Guide

The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM), in collaboration with the Federal Transit Administration and Mobility Managers across the country, was tasked with developing competencies for the practice of mobility management. The process by which these competencies were developed, including a comprehensive description of a field implementation process, are detailed in a prior report available on the NCMM Website. This learning enabled NCMM to develop an implementation guide, which is intended to support the field in using the competencies in a variety of ways. Our competency work is intended to support a diverse range of mobility managers and other related personnel to increase their knowledge, skills and expertise in the field of mobility management. The establishment of mobility management competencies can bring an increased sense of professionalism to this growing field.

Competencies, regardless of industry, are the knowledge and skills that professionals are expected to know and perform. Definitions include:

> *Mobility managers are experts in what is called person-centered transportation. Individuals who cannot or do not drive face a challenge in getting from here to there. Mobility managers take the challenge away. Mobility managers know the transportation resources available in their respective service areas, how to use those resources and how to pay for those resources. Additionally, mobility managers are advocates for those who happen to be transportation disadvantaged.* [Wisconsin Association of Mobility Managers WAMM, 2017](#)

- A cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable a person (or an organization) to act effectively in a job or situation.
- Competencies refer to skills or knowledge that lead to superior performance.
- Measurable skills, abilities and personality traits that identify successful employees against defined roles within an organization.
- A measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully. ([U of Nebraska, Business-Finance Human Resources](#)).

Researchers explain that a competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by leveraging psychosocial and personal attributes, including attitudes, perspectives, and experiences in a particular context[1].

Competencies can help employees and their managers describe how a mobility management position is expected to be carried out and what the employee needs to do to be successful in the position.

1Sturgess, Gail. "Skills vs Competencies: What's the Difference?", TalentAlign. http://www.talentalign.com/skills-vs-competencies-whats-the-difference/. December 6, 2012.

It is important to note that competencies should be customized to the unique demands of a position. The competency work conducted by NCMM is not intended to be prescriptive or a one-size fits all approach to professionalizing the profession. As indicated in the adjacent text box, one administrator suggested that the competencies can be useful in the development of coordinated plans. Other uses are described in the following:

> *The Competencies will be critical for our Mobility Management Staff to speak to specific targeted audiences for our Coordinated Plans rewrites and updates. They will also be useful to conduct survey work and educate consumers about mobility options in their respective communities (mobility management administrator, 2016).*

Use by Policymakers and Funding Agencies

☐ Develop policy and funding recommendations. Mobility management positions are created and sustained by Federal, state, and local policy initiatives. These policy recommendations can result in the establishment of funding priorities that can support the advancement of mobility management positions. Policymakers can use the competencies, in part, as 1) a benchmark to assess the needs of communities regarding accessible and reliable mobility options and use these findings to communicate with legislators, constituents, and stakeholders; 2) evaluate existing policy and legislation to ensure it supports competencies, and 3) establish funding priorities and programs. Policymakers may also interact with mobility management professionals regarding their self-perception of current or needed competencies and may offer policy recommendations based on these gaps.

☐ Align mobility management with other initiatives. Mobility management is in part driven by technological advances, smart growth and smart city initiatives, and mobility on demand solutions. With understanding about the role of mobility management professionals, policy planners and funding administrators can better connect mobility management to these innovative and technology-driven solutions. Mobility managers can be key influencers to these new solutions – they understand the needs of riders, work across systems, and are adept at aligning disparate and sometimes competing programs.

However, initiatives related to enhanced mobility should be coordinated, strategic, and systematic. Understanding the mobility management role is a means of facilitating these desired end-goals.

Use by Administrators and Human Resources/Hiring Managers

- ☐ Recruitment. Use competencies to develop job descriptions, write position announcements, and assess candidates for mobility management positions during hiring processes.

- ☐ Performance Evaluation. Evaluate employee performance, since the competencies represent what an individual is expected to know and do in their position. Any difference between the competencies and an employee's current performance level can be used to identify professional development needs.

- ☐ Professional Development. Administrators and human resources professionals want to be sure that their staff is equipped with the knowledge and skills that are best aligned with needs of a position. When employees have these competencies, they can best contribute to the goals of an organization and, presumably, add value to an organization. Simply, an employer is getting a better return on investment for employees whose competencies match expectations. When there are gaps or differences between what employees are expected to know and what they actually do know this can help administrators and human resources personnel to make efficient decisions about professional development needs. Budgets for professional development and training may be limited in agencies or organizations. Thus, being able to more accurately align investments with need improves the efficiency of professional development expenditures.

- ☐ Budget Justification. With specific and measureable performance competencies administrators can justify budgets to support mobility management positions. Since competencies can be used to explain specific job duties and responsibilities, managers can equate or align these responsibilities to salary/budget considerations. This type of justification may be useful for boards, funding proposals, auditors, or other external entities to which agencies or organizations may be accountable.

- ☐ Communicate with Policymakers and Funders. Mobility management positions may not be considered vital to an organizational mission or role. However, with an emphasis on performance measurement, impact and outcomes, return on investment, and a description regarding how competencies are related to these performance outcomes, it is easier to justify mobility management positions to policymakers and funders.

Use by Mobility Management Professionals

Compare competencies to current position and role. Do a side-by-side to determine whether in a current position, you are completing more or less of these particular competencies.

☐ Evaluate your current job description. If you have more of these competencies, and are implementing them in your position, does your job description reflect this incongruence? Should you go to your manager to review your job description, duties, and salary?

☐ Assess professional development needs. If you do not have these competencies, are they relevant to your position? Can you identify professional development opportunities that enable you to acquire these knowledge and skills? Can you use this gap to justify participation in professional development events and forums to your agency or organization?

☐ Obtain a position in a mobility management profession. Are you interested in securing a position as a mobility management professional? Review these competencies to determine whether you are the right "fit" for an advertised position. If you lack some of these competencies, are there ways you to build your alignment with the position?

☐ Communicate within and outside of your agency or organization. Do people outside of our industry ever ask you to describe your job as a mobility management professional? Think about how these competencies can help you describe what you do in the role – both within your organization and to outside inquirers. Can you develop a "pitch" or elevator speech based on these competencies?

Use by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

☐ Integrate in Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans ("Coordinated Plans").

☐ Identify needed skills in the scope of work in hiring consultants to develop Coordinated Plans.

☐ Manage coordinated plan development consultants and evaluate their performance.

☐ Evaluate how inclusive their long range plans and other planning products are of these populations and what areas need to be expanded.

We hope that this implementation guide will be used in conjunction with other tools that an administrator, planner, or mobility manager professional may have within their agency or organization. The initial report developed by NCMM details the process by which the competencies were developed and is important to accompany this guide. As NCMM evaluates how competencies are implemented in the many diverse settings that mobility management professionals can work, it is important to obtain objective feedback. Please send your feedback, suggestions, and implementation strategies to Judy Shanley, Ph.D. at jshanley@easterseals.com.

Attachment A. [Competencies taken from NCMM Product.](#)

Competencies for Mobility Management Professionals

Through an extensive external vetting process, staff from the [National Center for Mobility Management](#) (NCMM), with the support of an advisory committee, identified competencies or knowledge areas that are important for mobility management professionals and program administrators who work in diverse settings. The advisory committee was comprised of mobility managers and related personnel from across the country and representative of the diverse ways in which mobility management programs/projects are administered. Mobility management competencies can be used for multiple purposes including:

1. Develop job descriptions, recruit qualified candidates, and hire mobility managers;
2. Integrate content about the competencies in communications, budget decisions, and other administrative operations with policymakers, funders, or community leaders;
3. Plan, deliver, or request professional development;
4. Support a grant application;
5. Reorganize a position within an organization;
6. Assess personal skills and attributes in relation to the demands of a position.

There are seven proposed competency development areas with multiple proposed competencies or skill sets in each area. These competencies are not intended to be prescriptive or a one-size fits all approach. As individuals use the competencies in their settings, it may be important to customize the skill areas to align with the unique needs or circumstances of a setting. Additionally, the competencies needed for a position or setting may vary based on the experience of the individual. The competency areas and the respective competencies for each area are as follows:

1) **General Competencies** or core competencies that are applicable across mobility management settings:

- Address Transportation Challenges
- Understand the unique transportation challenges faced by persons with disabilities, older adults, veterans, transitioning youth, low income individuals and other vulnerable populations
- Develop solutions that address unique community challenges
- Create process improvements
- Work creatively and in collaboration with stakeholders

2) **Transportation Competencies**. These competencies focus on knowledge and skill in understanding transportation and mobility systems and services.

- Address community transportation challenges
- Local transportation systems and processes knowledge (Beginner/Introductory)
- Local transportation systems and processes knowledge (intermediate)
- Local transportation systems and processes knowledge (advanced/expert)
- Understand various trip planning methods
- Local transportation resource knowledge
- Local, regional or statewide information and referral clearinghouse knowledge (i.e: one call/one click centers)
- Understand the role of transportation in accessing employment opportunities
- Understand the role of transportation in accessing medical services
- Understand the role of transportation in accessing affordable housing
- Understand the role of transportation in accessing social destinations

3) **Management/Leadership Competencies.** These competencies pertain to program and project oversight or authority.

- Address community transportation challenges
- Business Development knowledge
- Project or Program Management Experience
- Staff Training and Development Skills
- Committee Leadership experience
- Community Leadership desire

4) **Coordination Competencies.** These competencies emphasize knowledge and skill in building and sustaining relationships and/or bringing people, organizations, and systems together.

- Contribute to the local coordination process
- Develop priorities for coordination
- Collaborate within small and large groups
- Human service transportation coordination experience
- Collaborate with federal stakeholders
- Collaborate with statewide stakeholders
- Collaborate with local/community stakeholders
- Work across multiple transportation/mobility projects

5) **Outreach and Marketing Competencies.** These competencies focus on communications, using various modalities, to advance or inform diverse audiences.

- Seek networking and outreach opportunities
- Verbally "sell" program or projects via outreach and networking
- Attend outreach events
- Liaise and collaborate with community stakeholder groups
- Develop social media outreach platforms

- Develop program enhancing advertisements
- Write or edit press releases

6) Program/Financial Administration Competencies. This area necessitates fiscal, organizational, and managerial skill in processes and procedures important to mobility management.

- Strategic Planning
- Grant Writing
- Grant Reporting
- Data Collection
- Federal Funding Stream knowledge
- State Funding Stream knowledge
- Local or community Funding Stream knowledge
- Foundation Funding Stream knowledge
- Find and contribute to new funding opportunities

7) Technology Competencies. This competency area focuses on understanding, assessing, and utilizing varying technologies to facilitate mobility management services and systems.

- Assistive Technology knowledge or experience
- Trip planning mobile application knowledge or experience
- Wayfinding mobile application knowledge or experience
- Technology procurement experience
- One-call/One-click center practice

For questions about the competency development process, or opportunities to apply these competencies in your setting, please contact Easterseals NCMM staff, Judy Shanley at jshanley@easterseals.com or Jordan Snow jsnow@easterseals.com.