

## Maine Coordinating Working Group on Access and Mobility

Meeting Minutes of November 26, 2025 – Held via Zoom

**Working Group Members in attendance:** Nathanael Batson, Kirk Bellavance, Melissa Beecher, Roger Bondeson, Samantha Horn, Zoe Miller, Roz O'Reilly, Tom Reinauer, Megan Salvin, Libby Stone-Sterling, Joyce Taylor.

**Others in attendance:** Jennifer Grant, Ryan Neale

**1. Welcome.** Members introduced themselves and a recent trip in which they did not drive.

The Working Group is tasked with developing an implementation plan including a timeline, budget, staffing plan, and detailed work plan, and coordinating a mobility management approach among state agencies including creation of mobility hubs focused on populations experiencing transportation insecurity. The Working Group is asked to review best practices and federal guidance. MaineDOT has issued an RFP for a consultant to help meet these goals. The work may go beyond the February 1 deadline but should be finalized for the next legislative session.

A goal for this meeting is to develop a shared understanding of mobility management.

**2. Review of Existing Programs.** Ryan and Roger provided brief overviews of existing MaineDOT, Federal Transit Administration, and Department of Health and Human Services programs. The presentations are available at <https://www.maine.gov/dot/programs-services/transit>

Key points for MaineDOT include:

- Maine receives roughly \$50M for various FTA programs, with each focused on specific uses, areas, and/or populations and with varying requirements for non-federal match.
- MaineDOT provides \$20M to support public transportation, including nearly \$8.6M for bus operators
- Maine's aging and dispersed population poses challenges
- We are likely to continue to operate in a funding-constrained environment
- Coordination is key to making the best use of limited resources
- Federal regulations have a chilling effect on innovation and creativity in combining services or funding
- Education about the existence and availability of existing service is an important opportunity

Key points for DHHS include:

- The current Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NET) broker model was introduced in 2013 and replaced the fee-for-service system
- Three brokers currently cover eight transportation regions
- Brokers contract with Maine-based transportation providers for rides
- Maine has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest utilization in the nation by population, approximately two million per year
- Transporters include private sector transporters, public transportation, mileage reimbursement, commercial taxis and airlines, agency vehicles, wheelchairs, and Uber/Lyft
- Funding for state fiscal year 2026 is \$81M (approximately \$50M federal and \$31M state)

- Brokers are paid a per member, per month rate determined by an actuary
- Challenges for NET include
  - Long distances to healthcare providers
  - Closing or consolidation of medical services
  - Rider no-shows (over 2,000 per month)
  - Workforce shortages
  - Insurance costs for transporters and vehicles
  - Very high demand on the program
  - Federal and state regulations that limit coordination
    - Competitive procurement of services
    - Mandate for shortest distance and lowest cost option
    - Prohibition on the use of Medicaid funds to subsidize or supplant funding for other programs
- Opportunities include:
  - Reduction of “dead head” miles where no passenger is in the vehicle
  - Coordination
  - Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

The Working Group may consider working with Maine’s congressional delegation to revise the federal language. Technology including artificial intelligence could improve coordination and trip matching.

**3. Introduction to Mobility Management.** Mobility management addresses the lack of transportation options and lack of coordination among transportation services and supports. Two in five Maine adults experience transportation security and are more likely to be experiencing poverty, to be black, to be young adults, and to have a disability. Many people with financial resources also struggle with transportation insecurity.

Mobility management focuses on helping people connect to transportation options and on creating new services or providing additional funding. A key piece is increasing capacity and person-centered resources. Mobility management can be done by people assigned to the role or others. Mobility management helps to tie together municipalities, human service providers, riders/advocates, healthcare facilities, metropolitan planning organizations, and transportation providers. Mobility managers help connect resources for users.

Moving Maine received a federal Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM) grant in 2024. The initiative is to stand up a regional organization with York County Community Action Corporation as the hub. YCCAC is hiring a full-time mobility manager to help with coordination and expand options. The hub will provide a proof of concept applicable to other areas of the state. Core components include a dedicated mobility manager, a network of stakeholders, and ongoing assessment, flexible funding, promotion of available transportation resources, and train-the-trainer education. Partners and stakeholders from around the state are providing input. The goal is to secure long-term funding for this and similar efforts.

YCCAC already does many aspects of mobility management. Schedulers connect callers to resources at YCCAC and elsewhere. YCCAC coordinates with other programs but more is needed. YCCAC will be posting for the mobility management position next week. **Tom will share the job description with the group.**

**4. Update on RFP and Consultant Selection Process.** MaineDOT received three proposals in response to the RFP for a consultant. Proposals will be evaluated individually against the scoring criteria. The scoring team will meet after Thanksgiving to select a preferred consultant. MaineDOT will then negotiate to get the preferred consultant under contract.

The consultant will assist with researching and gathering materials for the Working Group's report. The Working Group ultimately will be responsible for the content of the report.

#### **5. Next Steps and Adjournment.**

Future meetings will be 90 minutes. **Joyce, Jenn, and Zoe will connect to discuss upcoming tasks, meetings, and schedules.**

The Working Group should focus on system improvements rather than uncertainty about funding.

Smaller volunteer driver programs could use some assistance. Many people who are not eligible for MaineCare struggle with transportation insecurity and can not go through the broker.

Transportation is a challenge when medical appointments run long. This happens frequently and may present an opportunity to coordinate with medical providers. The broker has to find another driver when appointments run later rather than having the assigned driver wait. There is likely to be interest in the Legislature in creating a transportation ombudsman to coordinate referrals and help coordinate services. **We should get more information on this for the next meeting.**

No shows may be due to communication issues between travelers and drivers. Technology could help improve communication.

The next Working Group meeting is 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. on December 9.