

Needs Assessment: Commute Trip Reduction Training for Jurisdictions

Background

This document summarizes a “needs assessment” of jurisdiction Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) implementers who are new to their positions (or their jurisdiction is new to the CTR program.) It supports a project that will train jurisdictions on the basic operations of a CTR program beginning in Winter 2023.

The needs assessment was informed by jurisdiction CTR implementers in fall 2022. WSDOT interviewed implementers in multiple small jurisdictions that experienced a change in program operations. Additionally, WSDOT interviewed several jurisdictions with established programs about the training materials and resources they used in guiding their programs. Through assessing the needs and current practices, WSDOT identifies requirements and best practices for the training program.

Needs Assessment Findings

Consistent competencies in long-established programs

Common features across CTR programs that have operated for many years include:

- Base information about the CTR law and its requirements of employers.
- Administration of program reports and surveys including step-by-step instructions.
- Allowance for 1:1 or group connections with ETCs and web-hosted materials for ETCs.

Beyond these common features, jurisdictions’ priorities differ according to their regional transportation system, budget allowances, elected priorities, and business relationships.

What we heard from new jurisdictions

The subset of newly initiated implementers expressed interest in developing the following competencies:

- Compliance with the statute.
- Worksite engagement.
- TDM strategic program development.

Under these themes, implementers expressed a need for knowledge of specific topics, which are outlined in the **Appendix**.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) interest and experience varies

- For some implementers, meeting the minimum requirements of the law is the extent of their jurisdiction’s goals or capacity. Technical assistance and training beyond this scope is not desired.
- Several implementers need training on processes and procedural programs, such as the survey, program reports, and CTR plans.
- Several implementers wished to know how CTR can further develop their transportation programs and meet jurisdictional goals in which TDM plays a factor.

Conducting a training program

Implementers shared that a successful CTR Training program would have the following attributes:

- Creates consistent guidance that is uniform across jurisdictions.
- Connects implementers with peers and opportunities to network.
- Schedules trainings on a semi-annual basis.
- Publishes resources to a website for reference.

Next Steps

Part I

WSDOT will first create trainings for competencies that directly impact a jurisdiction's ability to comply with the statute. This includes knowledge of CTR's policy framework and sharing examples of program strategies that have developed throughout the State.

Part II

After this initial set of trainings, WSDOT will propose strategies to advance skills and competencies that support jurisdiction implementers who desire more specialized skills.

Appendix 1: CTR Training Themes and Topics

Compliance with the statute

New implementers who didn't inherit a program with administrative guidance expressed a desire for tactical, process-driven steps to remain compliant with the CTR statute.

Grant reporting and compliance

- Orientation to the process of submitting invoices; the type of information required; and what qualifies for reimbursable expenses, including allowable incentives.
- Administrative workplan: Explanation of the annual timeline and grant milestone requirements.
- Understanding of the CTR law and its requirements.

Step-by-Step Process

- Tactical and process-driven steps to implement the biennial Survey and Program Report. (Note: multiple tools, policies, and practices are in the process of being updated.)

Worksite Engagement

Conducting engagement is different in each jurisdiction, and WSDOT does not direct how to accomplish the objectives outlined below.

ETC Orientation

- Source newly affected sites; ETC training; non-responsive worksites.
- How to engage ETCs (what's required of them? And how do you make it meaningful?)

Tools and Materials

- Communication resources for ETCs: email templates, materials, videos, marketing campaigns.

TDM Strategic Program Development

Many implementers expressed a desire to advance the goals of their jurisdiction through CTR.

Engage worksite leadership

- Communication resources for business leadership and decision-makers, demonstrating the value of TDM in benefiting private enterprise as well as generating a public good.

Advance jurisdiction competencies

- Resources available to learn more about CTR applications and TDM.
- Integration with other TDM initiatives (PSRC, ACT, etc.)
- Skills for integrating CTR in adjacent planning efforts, i.e., transit plans, ridesharing, equity goals, climate action plans, etc.

What we didn't hear

Implementers new to their positions may not be familiar with (or have the resources to pursue) strategies applied by established CTR programs.

- CTR contract structure: Code allows for jurisdictions to partner and share resources to implement CTR requirements. New jurisdictions may benefit from this strategy by identifying opportunities for partnerships/efficiencies.
- Additional funds: Implementers expressed a concern about resources to implement and/or advance CTR. Only more experienced implementers identified external grants as a solution to needing additional resources.