

ADA Stop Announcement Program
Training Transit Operators and Supervisors
on Calling Out Stops

Final Report
And Training Modules

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INTRODUCTION

This final report identifies and describes the essential components for developing and carrying out an ADA stop announcement implementation program and a training program for operators and supervisors on calling out stops. The foundation for these programs is based on knowledge and information gathered in the course of conducting this demonstration project at two pilot sites.

The purpose of this final report is three-fold. First, this report is intended to serve as a guide for transit agencies and consumer groups on the critical elements needed for developing an effective program for achieving full compliance with the ADA civil right guarantee of calling out stops. To achieve full compliance, the ACB Project Team has found that it is necessary to first conduct an ADA Stop Announcement Program Needs Assessment before an effective implementation strategy can be carried out.

Second, this report identifies and describes each of the elements that are needed for developing and carrying out a model training program including the training curriculum for transit operators on calling out stops. For each of these elements, key principles and guidelines are discussed so that transit agencies and consumer groups will have a clear idea of what to do in implementing the training program and course. Project findings and results also are discussed for each of the key elements. ACB has included in this report the four training modules, a description of operator evaluations of the two pilot trainings, pre- and post-test results on operator attitudes, and actual operator compliance rates with respect to calling out stops based on monitoring by the two transit agencies and consumer advocates.

While the training program and curriculum on calling out stops stands alone as a highly effective training tool, ACB strongly recommends that this program and course be implemented **ONLY** after an ADA Stop Announcement Program Needs Assessment has been conducted. The newly founded National Center on Calling Stops (NCCS) is

working extensively with other communities around the country in preparing such assessments and in implementing long range stop announcement implementation initiatives. Transit agencies and consumers should contact Project ACTION or the American Council of the Blind for information regarding this material.

Finally, ACB refers readers of this report to and strongly recommends an important document prepared by the Project Team entitled "Self Advocacy Guide".

BACKGROUND

This demonstration effort stems from a widely acknowledged perception among both transit professionals and consumers that far too many operators of fixed route bus and even rail services are failing to call out stops. No systematic research has been undertaken to actually identify the extent of compliance with the ADA stop announcement guarantee among transit agencies. However, there is ample anecdotal evidence that the extent of non-compliance is long standing and pervasive. The impact of such non-compliance on the lives and travel experiences of people who are blind, visually impaired, or who have cognitive impairments or who have other hidden disabilities is unmistakable. Calling out stops is for scores of people with disabilities analogous to the lift for people with mobility impairments. The failure to call out stops effectively renders fixed route service inaccessible to people who depend on the consistent and accurate announcement of major intersections, transfer points, and destination points. It is a violation of an individual's civil right. Getting off at the wrong stop can result in missing a crucial job interview, not getting to work on time, missing an important medical appointment or social engagement, disorientation and confusion or even injury.

Until recently, no training or technical assistance programs have been available to transit agencies to assist in achieving greater compliance with the ADA stop

announcement guarantee. Local transit agencies have been left to their own devices in developing and implementing initiatives aimed at reversing the pattern of non-compliance. While some agencies have achieved success, especially with the procurement of automated stop announcement systems, the vast majority of agencies lack the funding resources to immediately equip fixed route vehicles with automated stop announcement systems. In the meantime, many transit agencies have not known what to do or instituted measures that have yielded at best limited results.

The policy implications of long standing non-compliance are significant. Since consistent non-compliance by fixed route operators in calling out stops renders fixed route vehicles inaccessible for those who depend on stop announcements, blind and visually impaired persons and others with disabilities would be legally entitled to retain their ADA paratransit eligibility or be deemed eligible for such service.

The guidelines and suggestions contained in this report, the training curriculum, and the consumer self advocacy reference guide will help fill a programmatic void that has existed for more than seven years since the signing of the ADA.

KEY COMPONENTS FOR DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE ADA STOP ANNOUNCEMENT PROGRAM

To achieve full compliance with the ADA stop announcement guarantee, transit agencies need to develop a comprehensive strategy and program that will lead to system-wide compliance and maintain high compliance rates on an on-going basis. To do this, agencies need to be aware of the key components in the transit service delivery system that are crucial to designing an effective program. The principal components that make up an effective stop announcement program include:

- **Labor-Management Commitment and Supervisory Support:** The adoption of clear and unequivocal policies directed at implementing the ADA stop

announcement guarantee and the willingness of managers, union representatives, and supervisors to meeting the goal of full compliance as evidenced by pro-active initiatives.

- **A Well-Developed Monitoring System for Tracking Operator Compliance:** An objective monitoring program for evaluating the extent of operator compliance with the stop announcement requirements and that generates reliable data at periodic intervals on individual operator compliance rates and a database on system-wide compliance rates.
- **Consumer Complaint Process:** A fair and efficient system for processing consumer complaints and an informed and pro-active disability community that is fully aware of its ADA rights and responsibilities and knowledgeable in the proper use of the complaint process.
- **Operator/Supervisor Training:** A well organized program including a teaching curriculum for training and coaching operators and supervisors on calling out stops.
- **The Disciplinary Process:** Enforcement of the disciplinary process and the incorporation of non-punitive measures that help achieve positive changes in operator behavior and enhance labor management relations.
- **Disability Community Input:** A process for involving (including the sharing of information on system-wide compliance rates) blind and visually impaired consumers and other persons with disabilities at key junctures in the transit agency's overall program for promoting operator compliance with stop announcement requirements.
- **Customer Information Services:** A courteous, responsive, and well trained customer information staff that provides accurate and complete route, destination, and other trip information to customers with disabilities including blind and visually impaired persons.

When sound strategies are adopted and implemented by transit agencies for each of these components, significant improvements in compliance rates for calling out

stops can be achieved and sustained on a long term basis. Conversely, low compliance rates or insufficient progress for achieving full compliance with respect to calling out stops usually means that one or more of the above components are either not in place or not working. Thus, the development and implementation of a training program for calling out stops should be considered in the context of a coordinated and comprehensive program that includes all of the components listed above. By itself, a training program, no matter how well conceived or implemented, is likely to be limited at best in its impact on operator behavior unless other key program components are initiated.

A MODEL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR TRANSIT OPERATORS AND SUPERVISORS ON CALLING OUT STOPS

The ACB model training program has been developed and tested at two pilot sites. Similar approaches and methodologies were used at the two sites so that findings and results could be compared and contrasted from site to site. For example, one of the strategies employed by ACB in developing and testing the training program and curriculum focused on involving consumers, transit managers, operators and supervisors, and collective bargaining representatives. The ACB Project Team encouraged maximum participation by persons representing these interests at each site based on the premise that the quality of the planning process, the training, and the training materials would be enhanced as a result. On the whole, all these major interests were represented throughout the conduct of the project, and this made it possible for the Project Team to identify key factors that contributed to the success of the training effort and achieving the goal of full compliance with calling out stops.

Purpose and Goals of the Training

The overriding purpose of the training effort was to develop a model training program that would significantly alter non-compliant behavior among transit operators

and result in the consistent and ongoing calling out of stops by operators after completing the training course. The specific goals identified by ACB in pursuit of this overriding purpose were to:

- Develop an innovative and replicable ADA training program that specifically addresses the issue of calling out stops;
- Create and test a training program that enhances the awareness of transit operators and supervisors regarding the impact of compliance and non-compliance with calling out stops; and
- Develop a practical handbook to be used by transit personnel and representatives of disability organizations to train transit operators and supervisors to call out fixed-route stops on a consistent basis.

The ACB Project Team concluded early in the planning phase of the project that the final training program had to be simple and easy to administer and designed in such a way that the training could be given by both supervisory staff and professional training staff. This was considered critical because it became clear to ACB after consultation with transit agency representatives that large numbers of operators could be trained only if the training modules were simply constructed and could be easily given by transit staff with varied training skills. The training curriculum that has emerged is, therefore, comparatively short and carefully scripted so that virtually any member of a transit agency's staff can give the training with some advanced instruction one-on-one, in small groups, or classes as large as 30 operators and supervisors.

Labor-Management Commitment and Supervisory Support

Principles and Guidelines. Ideally, strong commitment and support from labor and management all but insure the successful development and implementation of a training program on calling out stops. An effective program can still be carried out with strong management commitment and support so long as the local transit union is not

resistant to implementation. In the absence of strong commitment from either party, however, it is likely that any training effort will be at best short lived.

The key to cultivating commitment and support from managers, supervisors, and collective bargaining representatives is initially a dialogue among all concerned parties on the need for cooperation before the training effort begins. Advanced consultation and open discussion of barriers may not generate at the outset immediate agreement on the specific details of enforcing compliance after training, but it can help set in motion a process for identifying key areas of agreement and a consensus on the importance of the calling out stops civil right guarantee.

One of the primary purposes of initiating early dialogue is to enlist the participation of managers and union representatives in the training sessions themselves. Given the many competing demands on transit staff, it will be important to choose times and select a limited number of training sessions that fit into the schedule of union representatives and managers. At the very least, one manager or supervisor should be present at each training and several trainings should be attended by one union representative.

After each training, the supervisor should follow-up with operators who have completed the training in one or more informal ways to encourage compliance and promote the message that they can do it. This can be done in a number of ways but the most effective approach is personal communication. If the supervisor taking the training does not have direct daily contact with operators who have completed the training, front-line supervisors should be instructed to personally encourage operators to call out stops. In addition to one-on-one encouragement, other approaches can include:

- posting notices on bulletin boards in garages
- inserting messages in operator pay envelopes
- placing posters in break rooms encouraging operators to call out stops
- acknowledging operators who call out stops (operator of the month,

awards, etc.)

Project Findings and Results. The Project Team found that obtaining labor management commitment and supervisory support for the training effort and on the broader goal of achieving full compliance occurred at two levels. First, the Team found that obtaining a commitment from managers and union representatives to participate in the training was fairly straight forward and easy. Securing the involvement of these individuals was simply a matter of scheduling the training sessions at times that were convenient. Second, securing labor management commitment and supervisory support in doing the follow-up work after the training and providing the necessary coaching and encouragement presented a greater challenge.

At both sites, letters of cooperation were submitted at the request of Project ACTION by labor-management representatives indicating their willingness to work together in planning the training, delivering the training, and conducting follow-up after the training. At the outset, all parties expressed considerable enthusiasm and a sincere willingness to develop and test a training program that would achieve substantial increases in compliance rates.

At Pilot Site 1, management assumed a strong leadership role in many aspects of developing and testing the program and the union assumed a supportive but largely silent role. One of the superintendents of a garage facility from which operators had been selected for the training played a pivotal role in providing follow-up coaching and encouragement after completion of the pilot training. This superintendent advised the Project Team that his goal was to get all of the operators who took the training to achieve full compliance on calling out stops. Soon after the pilot training, this superintendent worked directly with front-line and other supervisors to encourage operators to call out all required stops. Using the curriculum developed by the Project Team, he also began to give the training on calling out stops to other operators in his facility who had not taken the training. The efforts of this supervisor played a significant

role in galvanizing support among operators and front-line supervisors for achieving the goal of full compliance. His efforts also appeared to have a positive rippling effect on the superintendents of other garage facilities. The Project Team developed and maintained a close working relationship with this superintendent throughout the latter half of the project period.

At Pilot Site 2, both management and union leaders appeared to vacillate at times in their commitment and support of the program as a result of major changes in the composition of the transit board and changes in top management personnel and union leadership. Preoccupied with organizational changes within the transit agency and leadership changes in the union, transit staff and union stewards could not always give the pilot program the time and attention needed.

Another critical factor affecting the progress and outcome of the pilot training effort at this second site concerned the nature of the labor-management relationship itself. The extent of the management-union commitment to working with operators after the training to encourage compliance appeared to be affected by the dynamics of the transit union relationship. Managers, supervisors, and union representatives appeared to be reluctant to work one-on-one with operators or informally encourage compliance due to fears that such coaching might affect the delicate and on-going negotiations between the two parties on "larger" issues. Interestingly, the point of contact for the Project Team was a mid-level staff person and there was no contact at any time throughout the course of the project with supervisors of any garage facilities. This made it difficult if not impossible to determine the extent to which front-line and other supervisors influenced operator behavior and attitudes about the training and compliance with the ADA stop announcement civil right guarantee.

Based on the Project Team's experience at both pilot sites, our conclusion is that the development and implementation of an effective training program on calling out stops is largely a function of the commitment and support provided by transit managers

and supervisors. In an environment, however, where there is a history of strained labor-management relations, management may be reluctant to commit itself wholeheartedly to implementing such a program unless there is a strong advocacy effort by the disability community.

Consumer Participation

Principles and Guidelines. Consumer participation in the actual conduct of the training is as important as obtaining strong labor management commitment and support. Involving consumers in the training generates healthy dialogue between operators and consumers. It helps operators put themselves "in the shoes" of consumers and promotes a greater understanding among consumers of the challenges facing operators on a daily basis. Involving consumers also promotes a greater degree of honesty and personal responsibility in the content of the dialogue among operators and between operators and consumers. This is especially true with respect to that part of the training in which operators are asked to discuss the obstacles and barriers that prevent or make it difficult for them to call out stops.

Effective consumer involvement in the training requires advanced planning. If transit agencies attempt to involve consumers late in the process, agencies run the risk of getting poor attendance or possibly no attendance at all. Advanced planning and outreach promotes communication, credibility, and constructive transit-disability relations. The following guidelines should be implemented, therefore, to insure effective participation by consumers in the planning process and in the actual conduct of the training:

- identify a few months before the first training one or several leaders who are generally recognized by the blind community as effective advocates on transit issues.
- make every effort to identify one advocate who is a member of the

American Council of the Blind and one who is a member of the National Federation of the Blind.

- contact the identified leaders and brief them on the upcoming training program on calling out stops and let them know that the transit agency needs constructive and responsible suggestions on how to best involve the community.
- get leaders from the blind community, other members of the disability community who regularly use fixed route service, and members of the Consumer Advisory Committee involved in the operator selection process.
- ask the community leaders if they would be willing to identify and contact other responsible members of the blind community to invite their participation in training sessions. Attempt to work through and with the community leaders as much as possible to avoid the time consuming process of directly contacting potential participants.
- ask for a list of all community members who have indicated a willingness to participate in the trainings with phone numbers so that the transit agency can contact individuals to determine their transportation needs in getting to the trainings. Make sure community leaders ask potential participants for their permission to give phone numbers to transit agency staff.
- contact the local ARC, your Area-Wide Agency on Aging, and members of the Consumer Advisory Committee and ask for the names and phone numbers of consumers who would also be interested in participating in the training sessions.
- once the location of the training facility is known, the transit agency should contact potential participants to determine whether arrangements need to be made for securing transportation to and from the trainings. For many blind and visually impaired persons, traveling on an unfamiliar route to get to the training usually means that paratransit needs to be provided (assuming stops are not being called out on the route.) ADA paratransit

also would need to be provided if any of the routes to be used by consumers are inaccessible by virtue of the fact that operators consistently fail to call out stops.

- if any of the potential participants are not eligible for ADA paratransit service, the transit agency should work closely with consumers to achieve a mutually satisfactory solution to resolving transportation problems.
- the transit agency should make an early determination as to whether, as a matter of policy, it can cover the cost of consumer transportation to and from the trainings. Consumers may not be able to afford the cost of transportation and may expect the transit agency to cover these costs since they are being invited and are volunteering their time.
- be sure to inform consumers early regarding the dates and times of the trainings to determine as soon as possible which consumers are free to participate.
- for larger group trainings (10-30), about three consumers should be selected although a greater number is always desirable. Ideally, attempt to obtain the participation of two persons representing the ACB , NFB or other organizations representing blind or visually impaired persons. People with other disabilities, such as wheelchair users, are strongly encouraged to participate.
- for small group trainings and one-on-one trainings, one consumer with a disability (preferably a blind or visually impaired person) is recommended.
- ask consumers well in advance of their arrival what their accommodation needs are at the training sessions. Handouts should be made available in alternative accessible formats for blind and visually impaired consumers (braille or large print). Advise trainers to call on persons by name, avoid pointing, describe what they are doing when moving about or making gestures, and read out loud information on flip charts. Make sure training room is accessible to wheelchair users and that restrooms and the building itself are accessible.

Project Findings and Results. The Project Team began the process of involving the blind community, especially local ACB members, early and found that three major obstacles had to be overcome in securing effective participation in the training sessions.

First, the Project Team had no difficulty in identifying a local leader at each site who was generally recognized as a respected advocate by the blind community on transit issues. These leaders were referred to the Project Team by the American Council of the Blind in Washington, D.C. One of the major problems facing these local leaders or coordinators was determining the availability and generating the interest of members of the local blind community in participating in the training sessions. Many community members had demanding and busy work schedules that made it difficult to set aside the time to attend the trainings. Many also had a long standing distrust of the transit agencies and skepticism about the commitment of transit management and unions to implement the training program and enforce stop announcement requirements after the trainings were concluded. There appeared to be a general feeling of disenfranchisement and alienation and a history of having little or no contact with management, union representatives, operators, and supervisors.

After a great deal of time and energy was expended by coordinators, a sufficient number of consumers participated in the conduct of the pilot training sessions. Six consumers participated in one pilot session and three consumers participated in the other session. All of the consumers reported that they found the training experience to be of great value. Many consumers indicated that the trainings generated a tremendous sense of connection with operators and felt that their opinions and experiences were well received by operators. After learning about the experiences of consumers participating in the training, many other consumers from the community expressed great interest in participating in future sessions.

Second, many consumers expected that the transit agency would reimburse

them for their transportation costs since they were invited and were volunteering their time. Neither of the transit agencies were able to cover these costs but they did make arrangements to pick up consumers and take them back home after the sessions. As it turned out, virtually all of the consumers were more concerned about how they were to get to and from the sessions than with the cost of transportation. The Project Team found it necessary to work very closely with the transit agencies and the consumers to insure that the lines of communication were kept open so that the transportation issue could be satisfactorily resolved.

Third, blind consumers at one site who wanted to participate in the training were previously declared ineligible for ADA paratransit service. This meant that ADA paratransit could not be used to pick them up and take them home. This would have prevented all of the potentially interested consumers in participation from attending the training if the transit agency had not gone the extra mile and provided "other" transportation for them. Transit vehicles were used but they were not paratransit vehicles. It is noted that all of the consumer participants would have been ADA paratransit eligible if a finding had been made that operators on the routes to and from the training consistently failed to call out stops. This would have rendered those vehicles inaccessible.

The Project Team found that effective consumer participation in the training sessions had to do with establishing trust and communication between transit staff and consumers and coming up with practical and creative solutions for overcoming real obstacles. In the end, local consumer leaders and transit management at both sites did whatever it took to make sure that consumers were able to attend the training sessions.

Identifying Trainers and Facilitators

Principles and Guidelines. One of the fundamental principles guiding the Project Team in the development of the training curriculum was the need to design the training modules in such a way that they could be taught by transit agency staff and consumers who are not necessarily professional trainers. This guiding principle is based on the premise that the training course on calling out stops cannot be truly effective unless it can be taught by the greatest possible number of individuals at any given transit site to help insure that the training reaches a large number of operators.

It is recommended that the transit training staff instruct non-training staff on teaching all or several of the training modules. The training modules most suitable and adaptable to non-training staff are Modules I and II. The other training modules can be given by non-training staff as well if they are both trained by an experienced trainer on how to teach these modules and if they team teach these modules several times with an experienced trainer.

Identifying trainers and facilitators is a function of the transit agency's commitment to designate individuals to do the training as well as the willingness of staff to provide training. At the outset, transit managers should first consult with their training staff and develop a simple approach for canvassing supervisors and other transit staff to determine staff interest in and receptivity to doing the training. Individuals who are not members of the transit training staff are likely to have time constraint considerations and may initially have some reservations about their ability to give the training. Managers should advise non-training staff that the modules are simple, easy to understand, and fully scripted so that they can be given by most transit staff personnel. To address concerns about staff time constraints, managers should advise non-training personnel that Modules I and II are stand alone components (as are all the modules) and can be administered in an especially short period of time.

Transit agencies also should tap the resources of consumers, particularly blind and visually impaired persons, in the community who would be interested in giving the training. In identifying potential trainer candidates from the community, transit managers should consider using one or a combination of the following outreach approaches:

- announce at Consumer Advisory Committee meetings the transit agency's interest in identifying trainer candidates with information on how to apply;
- send flyers or notices to local groups representing the interests of blind and visually impaired persons, persons with cognitive impairments, older persons, and other persons with disabilities; and
- contact directly disability leaders especially blind persons, individuals with visual impairments, self-advocates with cognitive impairments, and older persons.

Once a pool of potential trainer candidates is identified, it is suggested that the transit agency's training staff informally talk to potential candidates and then identify 3 or 4 who show particular promise. These candidates should be invited to participate in a briefing on the training program and training on how to teach the modules. The following simple steps are recommended for guiding this process:

- a member of the transit agency training staff should brief candidates on the curriculum and "walk" them through each module;
- the staff trainer should get an idea from the candidate as to which modules they are most interested in teaching;
- the trainer should provide each candidate with a copy of the curriculum and ask each person to review the modules on their own;
- the trainer should set up a training session and ask each candidate to give at least one of the exercises in the module to be taught and participate with the trainer who would serve as lead facilitator in a team teaching

effort;

- give at least two trainings with one candidate participating using the approach described above;
- if the candidate is comfortable, have the candidate give one or several modules as the lead facilitator in a team teaching effort with the experienced trainer; and
- allow the candidate to teach the modules for which they have received training on their own after final approval by the trainer.

It is suggested that transit agencies identify in the beginning a few supervisors and consumers who could conduct the training in the presence of at least one manager or member of the training staff. After giving the training several times in the presence of at least one experienced manager or trainer, this cadre of individuals should be ready and able to do the training on their own. However, a designated manager or in-house trainer should be available for answering questions and check in on the progress of other trainers from time to time.

Project Findings and Results. The Project Team found that, for budgetary constraint reasons, it was not possible to identify and train perspective trainers and facilitators on how to teach the course curriculum. The curriculum, therefore, was designed in such a way that it could be easily taught by both transit agency non-training staff and consumers with advanced preparation. Two modules (I and II), are especially designed so that they can be easily taught by non-training staff. During the course of the project, the superintendent of a major garage facility at one of the pilot sites initiated an ongoing training program for all operators under his supervision by teaching Modules I and II. Feedback from the superintendent indicated that the modules were easy to understand and apply in the field.

Since the scope of work to be performed under this project did not include a train-the-trainer component, these modules were designed so that they would be largely

self-explanatory. These modules were purposely scripted so that individuals with little or no prior experience as trainers could teach the course curriculum with relative ease.

The Operator Selection Process

Principles and Guidelines. The operator selection process should be structured to incorporate the following key principles and guidelines:

- the operator selection process should begin with an analysis of the results of monitoring efforts conducted by the transit agency and complaints received from consumers;
- the selection process should include an outreach effort by the transit agency to the Consumer Advisory Committee and/or individuals in the community who use regularly scheduled public transportation for the purpose of obtaining their recommendations on which routes or garages should be given priority for training;
- operators who are substantially non-compliant but whose non-compliance rates are not 90 percent or more should constitute the bulk of the participants in larger group trainings (10-30). The training is likely to have an impact on operators who may be substantially non-compliant but who are not highly resistant to changing their behavior and attitudes with respect to calling out stops. It is recommended that only a limited number of operators with extremely high non-compliance rates be included in trainings for larger groups;
- for maximum results, include in both small and larger group trainings one or two operators who are known to consistently call out stops and who can talk about the value of making stop announcements;
- one-on-one trainings or small group trainings should be reserved for operators who are known to be repeatedly non-compliant; and

- each perspective participant should be briefed on the training and given a short handout explaining the purpose of the training and asked several important questions about their willingness to apply the training after the course is given.

Project Findings and Results. The operator selection process at both sites played a critical role in the conduct of the trainings. Both transit agencies assumed complete control over the selection of the operators for the training based on general direction given by the Project Team. Both transit agencies were asked to select a combination of operators who consistently failed and intermittently failed to call out stops. In addition, the two agencies were asked to select a few operators who had a good record in consistently calling out stops. The idea was that a few operators might have a positive effect in the training on non-compliant operators and also help reinforce the work of the trainers throughout the actual course of the trainings.

Early in the planning process for one site, local ACB members thought that the transit agency might be attempting to "load" the training with too many compliant operators. As it turned out, the issue had more to do with which non-compliant routes should be selected over others. ACB members at this pilot site felt that a number of non-compliant operators who were well known by the blind community should have been included in the training. One or two of these non-compliant routes were included in the first "cut" of operator training candidates but they were then dropped without any reason given by the transit agency. Even though there were a sufficient number of non-compliant operators selected for the training, some of the ACB members felt that their recommendations had not been taken into account in the operator selection process.

The operators selected for the two pilot trainings were drawn from different parts of the service area at each site rather than from a few specific routes. The Project Team originally requested that the two transit agencies select operators from a few major routes but the operations staff at both sites indicated that this would have resulted

in too many operators being pulled out of service at the same time on a few routes. Virtually all of the operators participating in the two pilot trainings were veteran drivers. The Project Team specifically requested that veteran operators be chosen because transit agencies operations staff advised that resistance to calling out stops tends to come from veterans rather than new operators.

One of the most important conclusions drawn from the Project Team's experience with the operator selection process is that highly resistant operators who have zero or very low compliance rates and who therefore are extremely resistant to calling out stops should be trained one-on-one or in small groups. Larger group trainings were found to be especially effective when the number of highly resistant operators was limited to not more than three or four.

Delivering the Training: The Effective Use of Training Modules

Principles and Guidelines. The effective delivery of the training depends primarily on two important factors. First, the training will be most effective if it is given to the greatest number of transit operators within any given system. Several of the modules, therefore, have been especially tailored so that they can be given in a short period of time while still having a strong impact on participants. Other modules are more time consuming in their delivery but can have a very significant impact on certain groups of operators.

The following is a description of the approximate amount of time each module can take, with a description of the groups of participants each module is designed to address.

Module I: The ADA and Calling Out Stops as a Civil Right

Target Audience: All operators (new and veteran) and supervisors

Number of Participants: Up to 30. Can be given one-on-one and to small groups

(under 10)

Approximate length: Larger groups (10-30), 45-60 minutes; smaller groups (under 10), 20-30 minutes; one-on-one, 15 minutes

Module II: Roadblocks and Obstacles to Calling Out Stops

Target Audience: All veteran operators and all supervisors

Number of Participants: Up to 30. Can be given one-on-one and to small groups (under 10)

Approximate length: Larger groups, 60 minutes; smaller groups, 30-45 minutes; one-on one, 15-20 minutes

Module III: Simulation Experience of Standing in the Shoes of the Consumer

Target Audience: All operators especially operators who are consistently non-compliant

Number of Participants: Up to 30

Approximate Length: 1½ - 2 hours

Module IV: Practice on Calling Out Stops

Target Audience: All operators

Number of Participants: Up to 30. Can be given to smaller groups (5-10)

Approximate Length: Larger groups, 30 minutes; smaller groups, 15-20 minutes

Second, the effective delivery of the training on calling out stops also is dependent on the active participation of operators and supervisors in the training exercises. The trainer or facilitator will undoubtedly bring to the teaching effort his or her own individual style and unique approach to delivering the training. The training, however, is less dependent on the personal style of each trainer than on the willingness and commitment of the trainer to closely follow the script provided for each module. Each module has been tested and refined to maximize the involvement of training participants.

There are a number of guiding principles, nevertheless, that are important for each trainer to keep in mind that can enhance not only participant involvement but the quality of participation. It is recommended that, for best results, trainers:

- set the proper tone for the training by explaining why calling out stops has become such a serious issue and balance the seriousness of the issue with the use of humor wherever appropriate;
- share with training participants at the beginning of the training why the training on calling out stops is important to the facilitator. Tell a story or share an experience of the impact on the trainer's travel experience when an operator called out or failed to call out stops;
- ask participants to share a little bit about their experience of calling out stops or what they think the impact is when stops are not called out. Pick three or four operators to briefly share at the beginning of the training;
- go over some simple rules for the training with participants and ask for their agreement (example: "Please follow instructions for the exercises, give everyone a chance to share and avoid stories and long speeches. Will you agree to these rules in working together today?");
- keep the interaction and discussion among the participants going by getting numerous participants to make brief comments and by avoiding long stories or speeches (example: "Excuse me, you are making some good points but let's hear from some others in the room to get their reaction.");
- always make direct contact with participants by calling on them by their first name and by repeating briefly what they said;
- stay on track and follow the scripted exercises. Stay on time and avoid the extended erring of complaints -- especially those pertaining to labor management issues. Let participants know the training is not a forum for discussing labor management disputes or concerns;

- always reinforce the positive and thank participants throughout the training for their comments (example: “Good point, Bill! Thanks for your comment.”);
- be sure to summarize what the group is saying at periodic intervals (example: “So, what the group seems to be saying at this point is ... Is that right?”);

Trainers should **not**:

- allow one or a handful of participants to monopolize the training session
- argue with, reprimand, or threaten with disciplinary action
- single out a participant who has failed to call out stops or who has not supported operators in calling out stops; and
- allow any participant to disrupt the training or refuse to follow exercise instructions.

Project Findings and Results. The pilot training at Site 1 was attended by approximately 21 operators and three supervisors as well as top management personnel. From its inception, the tone of the training was set by the Deputy General Manager who spoke at length about how much the transit agency valued the service of each operator and their contributions to making the ADA work. The Deputy GM underscored the importance of calling out stops and the importance of the pilot training. He noted that this was an unusually innovative approach to calling out stops because it brought all of the key players together in one room--operators, supervisors, union and management representatives, and consumers--to share views about obstacles and to explore opportunities for solving problems with respect to calling out stops.

Perhaps as a result of the upbeat tone set by the Deputy GM, the training appeared to be well received by virtually every operator in the room and there was very extensive positive participation by operators and supervisors throughout the day.

Consumers from the blind community played a central role in making the training relevant to operators and supervisors. Every consumer shared extensively about their experience in the use of fixed route service and the importance of calling out stops. Consumer-operator interaction was not only free of conflict but it appeared that new relationships were formed during the day and that each participant had developed a deeper understanding of each other's situation and the importance of calling out stops.

As a result of the highly interactive nature of the training and the positive effect of each of the modules on participants, many operators and consumers shared at length about how much they had gotten from each other during the day. A number of operators asked if they could come back the next day for more training, and training participants gave the training team a standing ovation at the end of the day.

At Pilot Site 2, the training was attended by the Director of Operations, a union representative, several supervisors, and 20 operators. One of the principle concerns of the Project Team was that operators might not actively participate in the training. Actually, the operators from the very outset jumped into the training and participated fully throughout the entire day.

One of the most significant facets to the training was the participation of consumers from the blind community and a self-advocate from the local ARC Center. These consumers were highly effective in explaining to operators and supervisors the importance of calling out stops. The interaction between consumers and operators was also very productive and free of conflict. The Project Team believes that the involvement of operators, supervisors, and consumers was responsible for making the training successful. It appeared that operators were able to understand the views of consumers and that consumers were able to understand the difficulties experienced by operators in their attempts to comply with the calling out stops requirement.

A small group of operators--three or four--were extremely vocal about labor management issues. These operators attempted to side track the training throughout the day and redirect the attention of the participants to labor management concerns. Several of these operators also appeared to misunderstand the purpose of the training. These operators were under the impression that the training was intended to be a forum for operators to express their views on calling out stops and other related labor management issues.

At the conclusion of the training, many operators asked if the training could be given to other operators and several operators spoke very eloquently about the importance of operators taking personal responsibility for calling out stops. It is significant that one of the union shop stewards emphasized the importance of providing this type of training to all operators and the importance of calling out stops.

The Training Curriculum

Four training modules have been developed based on the Project Team's experience in providing the training for operators and supervisors on calling out stops at the two pilot sites. The four modules are:

- Module I - The ADA and Calling Out Stops as a Civil Right
- Module II - Roadblocks and Obstacles to Calling Out Stops
- Module III - Simulation Experience of Standing in the Shoes of the Consumer
- Module IV - Practice on Calling Out Stops

Module 1: The ADA and Calling Out Stops as a Civil Right

Instructional Objectives

1. To present trainees with an overview of the civil rights nature of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
2. To provide trainees with an understanding of what the Americans with Disabilities Act says about calling out stops.

Facilitators' Instructions

The theme of this module will be to get operators and supervisors to understand why calling out stops was declared a civil right in the ADA and why calling out stops is necessary. First, operators and supervisors will be asked what they understand to be the actual ADA requirements with regard to calling out stops. The facilitator will briefly summarize the major requirements. Second, blind and visually impaired consumers and others will be asked to share their experiences about what it is like to ride buses and not have stops called out. Operators and supervisors will be invited to ask questions and make comments and to imagine what it might be like to be a consumer with a disability to use public transportation. The focus will be on the theme of operator/supervisor empathy and the experiences of consumers.

The trainees for this module should include all supervisors, newly hired operators, and those operators who are known by management or the disability community to not call out stops. The estimated time frame for completing the exercises for this module is one hour. The exercises have been structured so that they can be adapted for presentation to one person at a time or give as is to classes of 30 operators and supervisors. The exercises also have been designed in such a way that the facilitator need not be a professional trainer. In

other words, managers can train supervisors and supervisors can train operators by simply following the instructions for each exercise.

Brainstorm Session with Operators and Supervisors: What Does the ADA Say About Calling Out Stops?

This exercise is designed to help facilitators understand the level of knowledge among trainees on what the ADA actually says about calling out stops. This exercise also will help trainees compare what they think the ADA says with what the ADA actually says about calling out stops. Use a flip-chart or note pad to record group responses for each question. Avoid leading the group and be sure to give every trainee an opportunity to fully respond. Encourage trainees to give reasons for their answers and discuss any major differences in the responses given.

Lecture: A review of the ADA Calling Out Stops Guarantee

This lecture is intended to emphasize the importance of the civil rights guarantee under the ADA with regard to calling out stops. The facilitator should first emphasize that the ADA is a civil rights law and that the need to call out stops is part of the ADA civil rights guarantee. Encourage discussion and questions and resolve any differences between what the ADA actually says and what trainees thought the ADA said in the brainstorm session. Distribute the attached handout, ADA Calling Out Stops Civil Rights Guarantees. Work with trainees to insure that they have a clear understanding of these guarantees before moving on to the next exercise.

Consumer-Sharing Exercises

Identify one to two consumers to participate in these exercises. It is suggested that the facilitator select one blind and one visually impaired person. Be sure to

brief consumers ahead of time to focus on the actual impact on their travel experiences resulting from past failures to call out stops. Advise consumers to avoid making any comments that suggest blame on the part of an operator. Brief consumers to be as descriptive and factual in their sharing as possible.

Operator and Supervisor Training Exercises

1. The ADA and the Calling Out Stops Guarantee: What is it?

(Brainstorm session with operators and supervisors: what does the ADA say about calling out stops?)

We are going to begin this session by spending a few minutes talking about what you think the ADA says about calling out stops. We would like to have you, the operators and supervisors, briefly share with us what you think the ADA really says about this subject. So let's start with a few questions to get us going:

- *Do you think the ADA says operators need to call out all stops or just certain types of stops?*
- *For those who think that just certain types of stops need to be called out, what do you think they are?*
- *Does the ADA say that operators need to call out these stops only for passengers with disabilities?*
- *If there is a long distance between regular stop announcements, does ADA say that operators need to make "fill-in" orientation announcements if a blind or visually impaired person is on the bus?*
- *Does the ADA say that an operator needs to call out stops requested by any passenger with a disability even if those stops are not regularly called out by the operator?*

2. Lecture: a review of the ADA calling out stops guarantee

Now let's review for a few minutes some important facts about the ADA and what the ADA actually says about calling out stops. Most important, remember that the ADA is a civil rights law and that calling out stops is part of the ADA civil rights guarantee. Specifically, what does the ADA say about calling out stops? You can compare the answers you gave in the brainstorm session with the ADA information we are about to present. Feel free to ask any questions as we go along.

The ADA says that operators of fixed route services (bus and rail) need to:

- a. Announce stops at all major intersections, transfer points, and major destinations. The ADA does not say that stops need to be called out for every intersection nor does it define major intersections or destination point; this is a judgment call best left to the local planning process. Any time a vehicle is to stop where passengers can get off and transfer to another bus or rail line (or to another form of transportation such as commuter rail or ferry), the stop should be announced.
- b. Make announcements at sufficient intervals along a route to orient visually impaired passengers to the vehicle's location. The other required announcements may serve this function in many instances, but if there is a long distance between other announcements, fill-in orientation announcements are necessary.
- c. Announce any stop requested by a passenger with a disability, even if it does not meet any of the other criteria for announcements. Announcements can be made personally by the vehicle operator or mechanically by a recording system. If the vehicle is small enough so the operator can be heard without a PA system, it is not necessary to use the system.

3. Calling Out Stops as a Civil Right: Why?

Now that we have a clear idea of what the ADA actually says about calling out stops, let's explore why calling out stops is so necessary for people with disabilities. What we will be doing is hearing from consumers with disabilities about their travel experiences and what calling out stops means to them in their daily lives. In other words, we want to take a look at why calling out stops is a civil right and then have a discussion with each other about our experiences on this subject.

- a. Consumer sharing exercise on what calling out stops means to them when they travel and why it is a civil right.

Let's listen for a moment to some of our consumers on what calling out stops means to them today when they travel and why it is a civil right. Let's begin with our first consumer. (Consumer sharing.)

- b. Operator and supervisor comments and questions.

Let's open up our session to some discussion about the subject of calling out stops as a civil right, the travel experiences of consumers, and your experiences as operators and supervisors on the subject of calling out stops. Please feel free to make whatever comments and ask whatever questions you have. Who would like to go first? (Discussion.)

Module II: Roadblocks and Obstacles to Calling Out Stops

Instructional Objectives

1. To create an environment in which operators and supervisors will openly discuss the roadblocks to call out stops from their perspective.
2. To identify solutions for overcoming barriers related to the calling of stops.

Facilitators' Instructions

The theme for this module is to enhance operator and supervisor understanding of the real roadblocks and obstacles to calling out stops. The facilitator will guide operators and supervisors in a free and open discussion on "what is going on" with regard to calling out stops and what is preventing operators from doing this. All of the roadblocks and obstacles will be listed and then trainees will be asked to identify those obstacles that they can do something about and those that are beyond their control. Since the focus of this module is on personal responsibility, trainees will be asked to identify solutions for overcoming obstacles and the steps needed to translate suggested solutions into action. Operators will be informed that they will have an opportunity to bring themselves into full compliance immediately after the training and put their suggested solutions into practice. Supervisors will be asked to commit themselves to a specific date for initiating management support activities.

The trainees for this module should include all supervisors and those operators who are known by management or the disability community to not call out stops. The estimated time frame for completing the exercises for this module is one hour. The exercises have been structured so that they can be given to one person at a time or to classes of 30 operators and supervisors. The exercises also have been designed in such a way that the facilitator need not be a

professional trainer. In other words, managers can train supervisors and supervisors can train operators by simply following the instructions for each exercise.

The exercises follow a specific sequence leading to the identification by each supervisor and operator of specific actions that will result in full compliance with the stop announcement requirements. It is suggested that supervisors or transit training staff give this training first to operators who will identify specific action steps for fully complying with the ADA and overcoming operator obstacles to calling out stops. Once a sufficient number of operators have taken the training and offered suggestions for the types of management support activities needed, the training exercises should be given to supervisors who in turn will be asked to identify the actions they intend to take to provide management support to operators.

Facilitators need to inform operators that putting solutions into practice offers both an opportunity to bring themselves into full compliance with the stop announcement requirements and an opportunity to work closely with their supervisor to obtain support and encouragement. In this regard, facilitators should bear in mind two important points. First, the opportunity offered to operators to bring themselves into full compliance is also an expectation by management based on the fact that calling out stops is an essential part of the operator's job duties. Second, all operators are not likely to bring themselves into full compliance after the training even though they will be informed that full compliance is both an opportunity and an expectation. It is crucial, therefore, that the facilitator obtain suggestions from operators on how management can constructively support their compliance efforts to obtain as much "ownership" on the part of operators in the process as possible and to promote a sense that they are working together with management as a team.

The note cards filled out by supervisors indicating dates for initiating management support activities should be turned into top management staff who should meet with each supervisor individually after the training to discuss management support efforts and establish benchmarks for assessing progress.

Operator and Supervisor Training Exercises

1. Identifying obstacles to calling out stops.

I would like take a little time to get your thoughts and opinions on what you consider to be the major obstacles you face as an operator in calling out stops or in getting operators to call out stops if you are a supervisor. In your opinion, what things prevent you as an operator from consistently calling out stops or, if you are a supervisor, what prevents you from getting operators to call out stops? You probably can think of many things but I would like you to write down what you think the major obstacles are. So lets get as many obstacles as possible listed in the next few minutes and then we will discuss them. Let's begin. (List obstacles.)

We have quite a few obstacles on our list now. Are there any more you would like to put down before we move on? (List additional obstacles if any.)

2. Identifying obstacles you can do something about.

If there are no more to be put on the list, lets identify which of these obstacles you can do something about yourself and which ones are totally outside your control and require the help of others. I would like you to take a sheet of paper and draw a line down the center making two columns. In the right hand column, I would like you to list all of the obstacles that you think you can do something about. In the left hand column, I would like you to list all the obstacles that require the help of others. Let's begin now. When you think you are finished, I would

like you to take a last look at the left hand column and see if any of those obstacles can be moved to the right hand column. Sometimes, we first think that the removal of an obstacle requires the help of others but after closer examination, we may conclude that we can do something about this obstacle ourselves after all.

3. Identifying solutions for obstacles you can do something about.

Now that you have identified obstacles you can do something about, I also would like you to identify the solutions to those obstacles. Pick the three or four most important obstacles that get in the way of your calling out stops or supporting operators in calling out stops, and give me some ideas of how you can overcome those obstacles. I would like you to write down your ideas and I then will go over with you how you think your ideas can be put into action. (Record suggested solutions and discuss.)

4. Putting solutions into practice.

Operators

Now that we have identified the steps you intend to take to put your suggested solutions into action, you will have an opportunity after this training to bring yourself into full compliance with the ADA stop announcement requirements. The ADA says that the stop announcement requirements are to be put into effect right now. In fact, the stop announcement requirements were to have been implemented upon the signing of the ADA way back in 1990. Calling out stops, therefore, is an essential part of your job duties. You as an operator also should know that management and the disability community will be monitoring your performance with respect to calling out stops. We will let you know how you are doing from time to time. Now I would like you to give me some ideas as to how management can support you in doing the best job possible in calling out stops.

Be sure to give me ideas that also address the obstacles you identified earlier which are beyond your ability to solve and which can only be resolved by other departments within the transit agency. Record answers on a flip chart or note pad if a group of operators are being trained or on a note card if an individual operator is being trained.

After the training, management intends to work closely with you to support you in calling out stops. We especially want you to know that we will seriously consider your ideas for providing you support.

Supervisors

Now that we have identified the steps you intend to take to put your suggested solutions into action, please write down on a note card your name and the date by which you plan to put your management support ideas into action. You will be asked periodically to report on your progress, highlight any obstacles, and discuss any needed changes for improving operator performance with respect to calling out stops. Be sure to incorporate in your list of management support actions the recommendations made by operators as noted above.

Module III: Simulation Experience of Standing in the Shoes of the Consumer

Instructional Objectives

1. To provide trainees an experience of what it is like to not have stops announced and not know the correct bus route and destination when boarding.
2. To give trainees a heightened awareness of the importance of viewing stop and route announcements as an essential part of the operators job.

Facilitators' Instructions

The theme of this module is to give operators and supervisors an "on the street" experience of the kinds of obstacles and barriers encountered by blind and visually impaired persons and other persons with disabilities who are let off at the wrong stop or who are not given the route and destination information requested when boarding. Operators and supervisors will be given the opportunity to experience first hand the actual impact of the failure to comply with the ADA stop announcement requirements through a series of exercises conducted while riding a bus in the community. Emphasis will be placed on encouraging operators and supervisors to share their views and reactions after participating in the "on street" exercises.

The trainees for this module should include but not be limited to all supervisors and those operators who are known by management or the disability community to not call out stops. The estimated time frame for completing the exercises for this module is 2-3 hours depending on the number of trainees participating in the exercises. The exercises have been structured so that they can be given either to several persons at a time or to 20 persons at a time. The exercises also have been designed in such a way that the facilitator need not be a professional

trainer. In other words, managers can train supervisors and supervisors can train operators by simply following the instructions for each exercise.

The facilitator for this module needs to make arrangements with the transit agency to provide a fixed route bus and operator for the conduct of this exercise.

The exercises are designed to give trainees the experience of getting off at a familiar stop and an experience of unexpectedly getting off at an unfamiliar stop. Facilitator may go directly to Exercise 2 and skip Exercise 1 if time constraints make it difficult to do the whole module. It is important that the facilitator, however, give trainees the impression that they are getting off at a stop that is familiar to them even though they will be let off at an unfamiliar stop. Be sure to encourage trainees to express their reactions to being put in this situation.

The practice exercise on calling out stops is intended to serve as a screening process for identifying operators who may need more regular practice after the training and one on one coaching by supervisors on calling out stops on a regular basis. Let other trainees give feedback on what each trainee needs to do to call out stops clearly. The facilitator should stress to trainees that the feedback must be positive and constructive.

Note: These two exercises require some preparation beforehand. Participants need to be given some instruction in guiding a blind or visually impaired person. Blindfolded individuals need a guide that will provide them information they need to negotiate the environment. Also the guide needs to move at the pace of the person wearing the blindfold. The guidelines at the end of this module may be incorporated into the preparation participants will receive before leaving the classroom. Also, blindfolds made of cloth need to be washed in a solution of laundry detergent and ½ cup of bleach after each use for safety and health reasons (OSHA). Each blindfold should only be used by one person between washings. Therefore, you will need enough blindfolds for each participant.

Operator and Supervisor Training Exercises

- Getting Off at the Right Stop

We are going to begin this part of the training by taking a ride on a bus and getting off at a stop that is familiar to most of you. I am going to ask that half of you here put on blindfolds and the other half serve as a sighted guide for those who are blindfolded. Lets count off by twos and all of the persons who count off number 2 will put on blindfolds. I would like for each sighted person to pair up with someone who is blindfolded and escort that person to the bus waiting for us on the street. (Group is escorted to the bus with facilitator.)

Now that we are all here on the street, I would like each sighted guide to escort your partner onto the bus and find a seat. (Trainees board the bus.) Now that all of you are seated I am going to take you to a stop with which most of you are familiar. Don't worry if you are unfamiliar with this stop, your sighted guide and I will explain where everything is. The whole idea of this exercise is to have you experience what it is like to get off at a familiar stop.

(Bus departs and approaches familiar stop.) Now I would like the sighted guides to escort their partners out of the bus and on to the sidewalk. Sighted guides, please describe what you are doing and where you are going to your partner as you get off the bus and then describe the physical surroundings.

Do all of you have a mental picture of what this bus stop looks like? When you do, let your sighted guide know and then have your sighted guide escort you back on the bus. (Trainees board the bus.)

Now we are going to switch partners and have the sighted guides put on their blindfolds and the other partners serve as sighted guides. Lets repeat this

process again making sure that each sighted guide describes what is going on and what the physical environment is like at the bus stop. (Repeat process and re-board trainees onto the bus.)

Now please let me know what your reactions were to getting off at this familiar stop. Who would like to go first? (Brief discussion by trainees on bus.)

- Getting Off at the Wrong Stop

Now I would like to take you to another familiar stop but this time I would like to ask that the sighted guides not tell their blindfolded partners what is going on or what the bus stop looks like. Your function as a guide is to protect your partner from harm and help him/her negotiate the immediate environment such as getting off the bus. This bus stop is pretty familiar to most of you (mention a very familiar bus stop).

We are approaching the stop, and I am going to ask the sighted guides to get ready to escort your partners off the bus. (Bus stops and trainees disembark).

I have gotten off the bus to tell you that in case you have not figured things out, you have just been let off at the wrong stop. I would like each of you who are blindfolded to have your guides walk you around a little bit and see if you can find someone who can tell you where you are and how to get back to where we started (allow trainees approximately 3-5 minutes to orient themselves. It may take them longer to ask passers by for directions).

Now I would like to ask the guides to escort their partners back onto the bus. As you get on the bus, ask the operator to indicate the route and destination of the bus (operator remains mute or gives wrong information as trainees board bus.)

Now that all of you are seated, what are your reactions to being let off at the wrong stop and either not being told the bus route upon boarding or being given the wrong information? (Brief discussion.)

Now that all of you know that we are purposely letting you off at the wrong stop, I would like the sighted guides to put on blindfolds and the others to serve sighted guides. We are going to repeat this process again so that everyone can experience what it is like to get off at the wrong stop and be given no route information or the wrong information. I will take you, however, to another stop (repeat exercise and hold discussion on reactions).

- Practice Using the Public Address System and Calling Out Stops

Now that you know what is like to be let off at the wrong stop, I am going to give each of you a little time to practice calling out stops while using the PA system and not using the system. Your supervisor will be working with you later if you feel you need more practice. When the bus stops at our starting point, I am going to ask each of you to come up and announce 5 or 6 stops on your route. The other trainees are to make only positive and constructive comments about each person's performance. I will ask you if you think you need more practice and also ask the group if they think you need more practice and coaching from your supervisor (pull up to the bus stop and begin practice).

We are going to return to the classroom where we will be talking about some of the lessons you learned during these exercises.

Assisting Blind and Visually Impaired Individuals Guidelines

- ALWAYS SAY WHO YOU ARE and what you are about to do.
- ASK THE PERSON IF HE/SHE NEEDS ASSISTANCE.
- ASK THE PERSON TO TAKE YOUR ARM. Never take a person's arm and propel him/her by the elbow.
- NEVER TAKE HOLD OF A PERSON'S WHITE CANE.
- STAND ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE WHITE CANE.
- STAY ONE-HALF PACE AHEAD of the person you are leading.
- TELL THE PERSON THE DIRECTION OF MOVEMENT (up, down, over) and THEN THE DISTANCE OF MOVEMENT (for example, step down six inches).
- DROP YOUR LEAD ARM BACK when you and the person you are leading are WALKING THROUGH NARROW AREAS.
- TALK THE PERSON THROUGH THE WALK BY ALERTING HIM/HER OF CHANGES in the regularity of the environment (different heights of steps, changes from hard to soft surfaces, etc.). Avoid giving directions such as "the chair is right over there."
- CALL OUT MANEUVERS to be made, (going up steps, etc.) approximately 20 feet ahead.
- MAKE SURE THE STOP COMMAND BECOMES AUTOMATIC. You may not have time for explanation in a real emergency.
- SPEAK CLEARLY, IN A NORMAL TONE OF VOICE. Many people make the mistake of shouting or speaking very loudly to a person with a disability in the mistaken belief that this will somehow enhance their communication.

Module IV: Practice on Calling Out Stops

Instructional Objectives

1. To give trainees experience in calling out stops.
2. To provide trainees with feedback on their calling out of stops.

Facilitators' Instructions

The purpose of this module is to provide operators with experience in the calling out of stops. In addition, each operator will get feedback on how well they call out stops from other operators and supervisors. Operators often claim shyness as an excuse for not calling stops. Consumers sometimes complain that operators' calling of stops cannot be heard especially on vehicles with no P.A. system. In this module the facilitator sets up a simulation in which operators can practice the calling of stops in a near-to-life situation.

The simulation in this module works best in a relatively large room with at least eight participants. In order for this exercise to work, a member of the training department needs to make an audio tape of the typical sounds and noises encountered on a transit vehicle in service during a busy time of day. This tape should have enough sound recorded on it to last at least 30 minutes. It will also be necessary to have a tape player or sound system with tape playing capability in the room prior to the training. Before the training session, prepare a list of bus stops to be used in the training. Enough stops need to be selected so that each trainee can be given at least three stops to call in the training session. Prepare a set of 3 by 5 index cards with three stops printed on each card. The stops you choose can be actual stops in the service area or you can make up names for stops.

Begin the exercise by asking one of the operators to come to the front of the room. Have a chair ready and ask the operator to sit facing away from the other operators. The human voice does not carry as well when the speaker is facing away from the listener as is the case on a transit vehicle. Have the tape player ready and place it between the operator who will be calling the stops and the trainees in the audience. Prior to the training session set the volume on the tape player so that the audience will have to pay close attention in order to hear which stop was called, especially if the operator calling the stops does not project his/her voice.

As each operator calls out stops from the front of the room, instruct the other participants to write down the stop announcement only if they have heard it clearly. After the stop announcements, stop the tape and select three people from the audience to repeat the name of each of the three stops. If the operator doing the calling could not be heard, suggest that he/she project his/her voice more fully. If a person slurs his words, ask him to speak slower and more clearly. Provide an opportunity for more practice. If the operator was heard be sure to provide positive feedback immediately. Select another operator from the group to come to the front of the room for the next practice session. Start the tape and have the operator announce three stops. Turn off the tape. Continue in this manner until all of the operators have had a chance to announce stops.

Operator Training Exercises

The training session today is designed to give each of you some experience in announcing stops. If you are somewhat shy, the experience will help to overcome your shyness. If you have a soft voice the exercises will help you to project your voice so you can be heard by passengers. Whatever your situation, today's exercises will be of benefit in announcing stops.

Each of you will have a turn at announcing three stops. When it is your turn, I want you to come to the front of the room and announce three stops. You'll be given a card with the three stops written on it. To make the situation realistic, I'm going to ask you to sit facing away from the group. To make things a little more interesting, I will introduce some competition by playing a tape of sounds typically heard on a bus during rush hour. Use a tone of voice that you think people will be able to hear clearly. But, do not shout.

As you announce the three stops, I'm going to ask the rest of the group to write down each of the stops. When you complete the stop announcements I will turn off the tape player and ask three people in the group to repeat a different one of the stops. If your announcements are heard clearly, you will have done a good job and may return to your place in the group. If people do not hear your stop announcement clearly, you'll be given time for more practice. (Have extra stop announcement cards ready). I will also give you some coaching on how to improve your announcements.

The next person will then come to the front of the room to announce three stops and so on until everyone has had a turn. Your job as a member of the audience is to listen for each stop announcement and write it down only if you heard it clearly. If you did not hear it clearly do not write anything down.

I want to remind you to take this practice session seriously. Announcing stops is part of customer service and is very important to people who are blind or visually impaired. Before we begin, are there any questions? (answer questions). OK let's begin.

[Select one member of the group to come to the front of the room and announce stops. Follow the plan laid out above until everyone has had some practice. Monitor the progress of the session and maintain a moderate pace.]

[At the end of the session, ask each participant what they learned in this session. Take a few minutes to allow people to share what they have learned. Close the session by thanking participants for their cooperation.]

Now that everyone has had an opportunity to practice announcing stops, I want to bring this training session to a close by thanking you for your cooperation and participation. I also want to remind you that calling out stops is a civil right for people who are blind or visually impaired as well as others with disabilities. It is also an important part of customer service. Again, thank you.

Operator Evaluation of the Pilot Trainings and Attitudinal Changes

Pilot Training Evaluations. At the conclusion of the pilot training for both sites, participants were asked to fill out an evaluation form indicating the extent to which they were satisfied with the training. Each participant was requested to rate each module of the training using a scale numbering 1-5. A rating of 5 indicated that the participant was completely satisfied with the training module.

For Pilot Site 1, 14 participants filled out evaluation forms of which 100% gave the training modules a rating of 4/5. It is noted that this session was free of labor management tension. For Pilot Site 2, 16 participants filled out evaluation forms and 81% or 13 participants gave each training module a rating of 4/5. Three participants or 19% of those filling out evaluation forms gave the training a rating of 2/3. It is noted that the three participants giving the training a 2/3 rating corresponds to the number of participants who felt at Site 2 that it was more important to address labor management issues than to provide training on calling out stops.

Participants at both pilot training sessions were asked to indicate what they learned from the session. Here are a few of the comments made from participants at both sites:

- "Not all people with disabilities have noticeable handicaps so we should call out stops for everyone."
- "I especially appreciated the interaction with consumers and have a better understanding of what they need and how much they appreciate our service."
- "It all boils down to the value of providing service."
- "I learned how dependent people with visually impairments are on calling out stops and the need to be kind to all passengers."

Participants were asked to make recommendations on how the training can be improved. The single most frequently made suggestion was that the training should be given to other operators and that management and consumers should continue to be involved in the training effort.

Pilot Training Attitudinal Assessment. In addition to asking participants to fill out the evaluation form at each site, they also were asked to complete a pre- and post-training test to measure the extent to which the training had a positive effect on operator attitudes. In general, it appears that operators entered the training with a positive attitude and completed the training with the same or slightly improved attitudes. For example, operators generally seemed to feel before the training that they understood the service needs of people with disabilities and acknowledged the importance of calling out stops and that operators are personally responsible for stop announcements. Operators appeared to have a high degree of empathy for people with disabilities before the training and an even higher degree of empathy after the training. Interestingly, many operators before the training felt that their peers had a fairly high degree of empathy toward people with disabilities but fewer felt after the training that their peers were empathetic. The Project Team concludes that the training resulted in raising operator awareness of the needs of people with disabilities while also raising the awareness that their peers may not be as empathetic as originally believed before the training.

MONITORING OPERATOR COMPLIANCE ON CALLING OUT STOPS

A Suggested Approach

The original ACB proposal for this project sought to use the services of blind and visually impaired persons to conduct pre-training monitoring and post-monitoring activities. The Project Team found that a more workable approach to monitoring had to

be developed which would involve the joint efforts of both transit agency undercover checkers and members of the blind and visually impaired community. The basic reason for the Project Team's decision to pursue a more collaborative approach was that many of the consumers volunteering their time indicated that they did not believe that they could perform all of the monitoring tasks for unfamiliar bus routes. There appeared to be too many logistical problems involved in monitoring an unfamiliar route.

The approach adopted by the Project Team and recommended for use by other transit agencies involves the use of undercover checkers in monitoring operators on a random basis and the use of blind and visually impaired persons as monitors on familiar routes. Using this approach, transit undercover checkers would do the bulk of the monitoring and blind and visually impaired persons (and others from the disability community) would supplement the work of transit checkers. Members of the community also could do spot checks from time to time on unfamiliar routes with some advanced planning and preparation. Both transit checkers and community advocates need to make sure that they both use the same data collection techniques in carrying out monitoring activities. At a minimum, the techniques used and data collected should include:

- checks on stops called and not called for major intersections, transfer points, and destination points;
- written recordings of compliance rates for each operator--total number of stops called versus the total number of stops required;
- written recordings of operator compliance rates for at least three-four trips or one long trip; and
- written recordings of trip date, time boarded, bus route number/rail line, and boarding stop/disembarking stop.

In enlisting the assistance of blind and visually impaired consumers in the monitoring process, transit agencies should:

- provide each consumer information on the route number (rail line) to be monitored. If a specific operator is to be monitored, the consumer should be given a specific time for boarding the bus or train to insure that the right operator is monitored; and
- provide each consumer a list of the required stops to be announced in braille or large print for each route or rail line.

Pilot Site Monitoring Results

The Project Team worked closely with the transit agencies at both pilot sites at developing and applying a monitoring strategy that would provide a reasonably accurate picture of operator compliance rates before and after the pilot trainings. Both transit agencies were asked to monitor each participating operator before and after the pilot trainings. Blind consumers were asked to monitor routes that were familiar to them.

The two transit agencies were able to conduct undercover checks of operators before the trainings on a sample basis. Data from these checks were combined with undercover checks made by consumers to get a picture of individual operator compliance rates and the average compliance rate for all operators before the training. The pre-monitoring for both sites took place about one-two weeks before the actual training.

Post-monitoring activities were conducted immediately after the trainings (one-two weeks) and follow-up checks were conducted at subsequent intervals. The training for Pilot Site 1 was held in mid-February and the training for Pilot Site 2 was held at the end of January, 1997. The transit agency at Pilot Site 1 monitored all of the operators taking the training one last time in the months of July and August. The transit agency at Pilot Site 2 monitored a selected number of operators in July and August who either continued to show low compliance rates or who were not monitored a sufficient number

of times immediately after the training.

Before conducting the last July-August post-monitoring, both transit agencies were asked by the Project Team to provide one-on-one coaching and/or small group coaching to encourage compliance and build operator confidence that they could call out stops consistently. The transit agency at Pilot Site 1 did conduct extensive coaching using front-line supervisors and inspectors. During a three to four month period before the last monitoring effort, inspectors periodically rode with operators to encourage calling out stops. The transit agency at Pilot Site 2, elected not to provide coaching or directly encourage operators.

The following table shows the average compliance rates with respect to calling out stops for operators before and after the trainings at the two pilot sites:

**AVERAGE COMPLIANCE RATES FOR CALLING OUT STOPS
AT TWO PILOT SITES**

	Pre-Training Compliance Rates	Post-Training Compliance Rates
Pilot Site 1	43%	100%
Pilot Site 2	55%	73%

Note: Compliance rates represent an average of individual compliance rates for all operators monitored. These rates were calculated based on the total number of stops called out versus the total number of stops that should have been called out.

Compliance rates resulting from pre-training monitoring are based on a sampling of operators. Neither transit agency was able to monitor all operators before the training.

The post-training compliance rate for Site 1 is based on monitoring conducted in July/August 1997 for all operators who took the training. The post-training compliance rate for Site 2 is based on a sample monitoring of operators in July/August 1997 and other post-training monitorings conducted prior to July.

The Project Team's analysis of pre- and post-monitoring data revealed two significant findings. First, full compliance with respect to calling out stops or significant increases in compliance rates can be expected through a combination of training and follow-up coaching by supervisors. The transit agency that opted to provide one-on-one coaching and encouragement after the training experienced a 100% compliance rate toward the end of the monitoring period. The other transit agency experienced an 18% increase or a 73% compliance rate based on the training and no follow-up coaching or encouragement. Second, the Project Team found that operators at both sites called out stops upon request 100% of the time but did not consistently call out stops at major intersections, transfer points, and destination points without training and follow-up coaching.

THE ROLE OF CONSUMER ADVOCACY IN ACHIEVING STOP ANNOUNCEMENT COMPLIANCE: CONSUMER ADVOCACY GUIDE

Responsible consumer advocacy can play a positive and significant role in assisting transit agencies on ADA compliance issues. The Self Advocacy Guide (Appendix D) provides practical guidance and suggestions to consumer advocates on achieving this goal especially with respect to obtaining compliance on calling out stops. This guide spells out step-by-step how consumers can advocate on behalf of themselves and also work responsibly with transit agencies. It is recommended that this guide be made available to local advocacy groups representing the interests of blind and visually impaired persons, individuals with cognitive impairments, older persons, and others with disabilities.