



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration



Innovative Transit Workforce Development Projects of 2012: Summative Evaluation

Background

The U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) believe that human capital is as important as physical capital. With the resurgence of public transportation in recent years, transit systems face a number of challenges: rapidly changing technologies (to vehicles, right-of-way, and customer information services), an aging workforce, and increasing ridership. These challenges make attracting and preparing new talent increasingly important.

Objectives

To help address these challenges, FTA published an initial Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) in 2011. A second round of funding for projects was released in FY 2012 seeking proposals for the Innovative Transit Workforce program, and 16 projects were funded. In 2016, FTA engaged Axiom Corporation to conduct a summative evaluation of awarded projects to gauge effectiveness against proposed goals and assess if further Federal investment was warranted.

Findings and Conclusions

The Innovative Transit Workforce Development projects produced participants who were trained, placed in employment, promoted, earned certifications, or introduced to transit careers and developed products useful to FTA and the transit industry.

Based on a competitive application process, FTA awarded a total of \$7,048,898 (\$5 million in 2012 funding, the rest from prior-year funding) for 16 workforce development projects. Recipients included transit authorities, higher education institutions, Native American tribes, and non-profit organizations individually or as a consortium that partnered with one another and the public workforce investment system, labor organizations, or other appropriate entities to enact workforce solutions.

Proposed projects supported areas in the transportation workforce lifecycle, including:

- Pre-employment training or preparation
- Recruitment and hiring
- Incumbent worker training and retention

Axiom conducted document review and structured interviews with participants from 14 of these projects. Overall, the program successfully identified promising approaches for workforce development. Of the 14 projects, 8 were recommended for further investment, 5 were somewhat recommended for investment, and 1 was not recommended.

Outcomes of these projects include the following:

• Youth introduced to transit industry careers	44,685
• Participants trained (incumbent/technical)	816
• Certifications earned	465
• Participants trained (pre-employment)	404
• Participants placed into employment	89
• Interns introduced to transit	40
• Training courses created	18
• Apprenticeships created	2

Products developed in the projects include:

- 8 pre-employment training programs
- 7 youth engagement programs
- 6 recruitment videos (agency-specific)
- 2 transit career educational videos
- 1 Transit Virtual Career Network
- 1 hybrid bus curriculum with supporting materials
- 1 youth STEM transit curriculum
- 1 website on transit careers
- 1 report on getting college credit for apprenticeships

Benefits

Projects funded under the Innovative Transit Workforce Development program explored different avenues for addressing common transit workforce issues that result from rapidly-changing technologies and an aging workforce. Through partnerships with educational and other institutions to develop and provide training, certifications, and increased knowledge as well as courses and tools, these innovations can assist the U.S. transit industry with meeting the workplace demands of the future to maintain mobility for all citizens.

Project Information

FTA Report No. 0128

This research project was conducted by Axiom Corporation. For more information, contact FTA Project Manager Betty Jackson at (202) 366-1730, betty.jackson@dot.gov. All research reports can be found at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/research-innovation>.