

Project Description: WMATA Platform Improvement Outreach Teams

When: May 2019-present

End Client: WMATA c/o AECOM-STV JV

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Background: In 2019, Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority contracted with AECOM/STV Joint Venture for a four-year contract for Communications and Outreach for Platform Construction to ensure that WMATA adheres to the Public Participation Plan. The joint venture partnered with ITA to assist with planning and execution of the Public Outreach Efforts. ITA’s role in this contract commenced in May of 2016 and are scheduled to continue through December of 2022.

Actions: ITA coordinates with the Client to identify locations, time blocks, positioning, staff numbers, and language requirements that will ensure that the public is reached in the most effective and efficient manner. A strong focus is placed on reaching the non-English speaking public as well as people with disabilities. Languages serviced include English, Spanish, Amharic, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, and ASL. Multi-Lingual staff receive formal training, and are thoroughly educated about project specific details, and travel alternatives.

The public is targeted with “Notification Outreach” efforts (verbal messaging and print collateral) 2-3 weeks prior to shutdowns. During this time, multi-lingual street teams notify customers of upcoming changes to rail and bus services during the platform construction initiatives, and the impacts that they will have on the public. When changes are effective, multi-lingual street teams provide “Customer Service Outreach” efforts (verbal messaging and print collateral) to assist the public with customer service and wayfinding support. Customer service efforts continue for the duration of the shutdowns, often for 4-5 months. Transit Ambassadors are considered essential workers, and ITA follows strict COVID-19 safety policies, including facemasks, social distancing, frequent hand washing/sanitizing, and daily temperature scans.

Results: Feedback from Metro Customers has been overwhelmingly positive. Metro Bus and Rail Customers love the “Yellow Apron Staff!” Customers often comment that they would have no idea what to do if ITA’s Transit Ambassadors were not on site directing and assisting them. Many have submitted formal comments to WMATA online, commending ITA’s Transit Ambassadors’ efforts.

Detailed reporting indicates over 1,800 Activations have taken place and nearly 500,000 customers have been engaged since outreach efforts commenced in May 2019. Over 50,500 Spanish Speaking customers have been engaged and 3,700 customers speaking other non-English languages have been engaged. Over 133,000 pieces of print collateral have been distributed*.

Total Activations to Date: 1,823

Total Engagements to Date: 499,259

Total Spanish Engagements to Date: 50,504

Other Language Engagements to Date: 3,712

*Total Collateral Distributed to Date: 133,445

*Due to COVID19, Collateral Distribution was suspended for 2020 outreach efforts.

