Category: Participant Education and Communication

Organization Name: Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)

Plan Asset Size: $11,577,395,845

Title of Project: 2025 Deferred Compensation Awareness Month

Project Implementation Date: April 2025

Project Description:

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) launched its 2025 Deferred Compensation Program Awareness Month campaign to increase participation and savings across a workforce of more than 75,000 active participants, as well as 22,000 eligible, non-participating employees. The five-week initiative combined targeted email outreach with virtual education sessions and one-on-one counseling, guiding employees from awareness to action and focusing on non-participants.

Results show strong behavior change. During the campaign, 1,660 employees enrolled in the 401(k) plan and 1,557 in the 457(b) plan, while more than 3,300 participants increased their deferral rates. Additional engagement drove 616 enrollments, 288 deferral increases, and $1.17 million in rollovers.

This effort demonstrates how coordinated communication and accessible guidance can drive measurable improvements in retirement readiness at scale.

Project summary

Plan profile

The **Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Deferred Compensation Program** includes 401(k) and 457(b) plans serving a workforce of more than 100,000 employees across the Greater New York City region. The program provides employees with tools, education, and personalized support to improve retirement readiness.

Background and need

The MTA serves a large, diverse, and operationally complex workforce, creating ongoing challenges in driving consistent retirement plan engagement. While the plan has long emphasized participation and savings, opportunities remained to further increase enrollment among nonparticipating employees and encourage higher deferral rates among active participants. In addition, ensuring employees understand and utilize available tools and counseling resources remained a priority.

Goals

- Increase plan participation among eligible employees
- Increase participant deferral rates
- Expand engagement with retirement tools and resources
- Increase utilization of counseling services

Commentary

"Communicating successfully to MTA's large, complex, and extremely diverse workforce is always a challenge, so this campaign — which was intended to drive retirement readiness — required more than just broad communication. We focused on reaching employees where they are, guiding them from awareness to action through targeted messaging and personalized support, and helping thousands take measurable steps to strengthen their retirement savings." – Nicole LaMorte, Director, Tax Favored Programs

Written justification

Project overview and purpose

The MTA's 2025 Deferred Compensation Program Awareness Month campaign is a coordinated, five-week initiative designed to drive measurable improvements in retirement plan participation and savings behavior across a large and diverse workforce. Building on prior years' efforts, the campaign reflects an intentional evolution in how the MTA engages employees, shifting from broad awareness to a more structured approach that guides participants toward action.

Recognizing that awareness alone does not consistently lead to behavior change, the MTA aligned its strategy to focus on enrollment, increased deferrals, and direct engagement with available resources, particularly among employees not currently participating in the plan.

Timeline and execution

The campaign was executed over a five-week period beginning in late March 2025. Each week featured a distinct communication focus, supported by coordinated outreach and engagement activities.

A series of five targeted email campaigns served as the backbone of the initiative:

- Week 1: Campaign kickoff and awareness
- Week 2: Enrollment with targeted outreach to nonparticipating employees
- Week 3: Promotion of retirement counseling sessions
- Week 4: Online tools and resources
- Week 5: Retirement readiness

These communications were reinforced by virtual group meetings and one-on-one counseling sessions, providing employees with opportunities to take immediate action following engagement.

This level of coordination required alignment across communication channels, counseling resources, and internal stakeholders to deliver a consistent experience at scale across tens of thousands of employees.

How the campaign worked

The campaign was designed as a coordinated engagement journey, using sequenced messaging to guide employees from initial awareness to concrete action. Each communication built on the previous one, reinforcing key concepts while directing employees toward specific next steps, such as enrolling, increasing contributions, or meeting with a counselor.

Outreach was intentionally focused on employees based on their level of engagement with the plan and included targeted communication to nonparticipating employees. This ensured that messaging remained relevant and actionable rather than broad and generalized.

A key differentiator of the campaign was the integration of digital outreach with immediate access to personalized support. Employees were not only encouraged to take action, but they were also provided direct opportunities to do so through virtual meetings and one-on-one counseling, reducing friction between intent and execution.

Government staff leadership

MTA staff played a central role in the development and execution of the campaign, providing oversight, strategic direction, and coordination across communication and engagement channels. Internal teams worked closely with partners to align messaging, ensure accuracy, and support the delivery of a consistent participant experience.

This collaboration enabled the campaign to be executed at scale while maintaining a focus on participant needs and plan objectives.

Results

The campaign generated strong engagement and measurable improvements in participant behavior.

Engagement

Five campaign emails were delivered to more than 75,000 participants, with at least 44% of recipients opening each message. Individual campaign open rates ranged from 44% to 54%.

Enrollment growth

During the campaign period:

- 1,660 employees newly enrolled in the 401(k) plan
- 1,557 employees newly enrolled in the 457(b) plan

Savings behavior

- More than 3,300 participants increased their deferral rates across both plans
- Average contribution rates remained stable across both plans, even as thousands of new participants entered the program

Participation

Participation rates increased across both plans during the campaign period. In the 401(k) plan, the percentage of participants with a balance increased from 66% to 68% while the number of eligible nonparticipating employees declined. Similarly, in the 457(b) plan, participation increased from 49% to 51%, reflecting a meaningful reduction in non-participation across the workforce.

Counseling and direct engagement

- 22 virtual group meetings with 497 attendees
- 1,291 one-on-one counseling sessions conducted

These interactions resulted in:

- 616 new enrollments
- 288 deferral increases
- 52 rollovers totaling approximately $1.17 million
- 342 beneficiary updates

These outcomes reflect not only strong engagement, but meaningful behavior change, with thousands of employees taking concrete steps to improve their retirement readiness during a defined campaign period.

Feasibility and replicability

The MTA's campaign model is highly scalable and can be adapted by other public sector plans. The structure relies on a coordinated combination of email communication, education sessions, and counseling support, all of which can be implemented using existing plan resources.

Key elements that support replication include:

- A structured, multiweek communication strategy.
- Targeted outreach based on participant status.
- Integration of digital and human engagement channels.

This approach allows plans of varying sizes to tailor messaging while maintaining a consistent framework for driving participant action.

Name: 524735-01-SESFE-WF-3701376-0225_Kickoff
Subject: April is MTA Deferred Compensation Program Awareness Month!
Preheader: Let the Program help you get to your retirement destination

View online

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

MTA Deferred Compensation Program

Keep your financial future running on time and on schedule

April is **MTA Deferred Compensation Program Awareness Month**, the perfect time to get on track toward the retirement you imagine.

Help ensure you're on track for retirement

Your pension and Social Security may not be enough to help you retire comfortably. The MTA Deferred Compensation Program can help bridge the gap to provide you with the income you may need in the future. And with automatic payroll deductions, you won't even have to think about saving the extra money.

Get rolling with tax-advantaged savings

You're eligible to join the Program (401(k) and 457 Plans) on your first day of employment with the MTA. You can contribute to your account on a pre-tax or after-tax (Roth) basis, and you can get started at any time.

- **Pre-tax contributions** are deducted from your pay before taxes are taken out. Your contributions and any earnings are taxed when you withdraw them, and any earnings are tax deferred.
- **Roth contributions** are deducted from your paycheck after taxes are taken out. You can withdraw your money tax-free as long as you make a qualified distribution.[1]

Put the Program to work for your future

You don't have to wait until April to begin making the most of the Program. Log in today at **empower.com/mta** and start exploring the wealth of tools and resources available to you. Or call **877-PLN-4MTA** (877-756-4682) for assistance.

Log in now

Keep an eye out for more information

Throughout April we'll be sharing information about the Program:

- Seminars on various topics will be offered virtually, hosted by one of our dedicated retirement counselors. To learn more, click on the Awareness Month tile found on **empower.com/mta**.
- Using the Program's online tools and resources, including budgeting tools, retirement savings and spending calculators, emergency fund resources, and more.
- Enhancing your retirement readiness, including checking your Lifetime Income Score[SM] to see how you are progressing toward achieving your financial goals in retirement.

Explore your other sources of retirement income

While your pension and Social Security were never meant to provide your total retirement income, they are key to your future, so it's important to know how much income you may collect when you become eligible. Visit **socialsecurity.gov** to see your benefits estimate and **rrb.gov** for U.S. Railroad Retirement Board information.

Questions?

Call Empower at **877-PLN-4MTA** (877-756-4682). Representatives are available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET. The automated phone system is available 24/7.

Enjoy the ride to your financial future with the MTA Deferred Compensation Program!

EMPOWER
Invest well. Live a little.™

1 Earnings on Roth 401(k) contributions will be taxed unless withdrawals are a qualified distribution as defined by the IRS.

Name: 524735-01-SESFE-WF-3838460-0225_Email1
Subject: Take the first step toward the retirement you imagine
Preheader: Keep your retirement running on schedule during MTA Deferred Compensation Program Awareness Month

View online

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

MTA Deferred Compensation Program

Bridge your retirement income gap

Take the first step by enrolling in the MTA Deferred Compensation Program

Most people will need several sources of retirement income, and while your pension and Social Security provide a great start, they may not be enough to help you retire comfortably.

The **MTA Deferred Compensation Program** can help bridge any income gaps you may have for your income in retirement.

Enroll in the Program and start saving today

You're eligible to join the MTA Deferred Compensation Program as soon as you become an employee of the MTA, and you can enroll at any time. You can choose to enroll in the 401(k) Plan, the 457 Plan, or both. Speak with a Retirement Counselor to decide what's best for you.

The Program makes saving easy with an array of features and benefits, including:

- Tax advantages. With pretax savings, your contributions are made before taxes are deducted, and any earnings aren't taxed until withdrawn, which is most likely in retirement when you may be in a lower tax bracket.
- Different ways to save. The Program also enables you to make Roth contributions, which are deducted from your paycheck *after* taxes are taken out. You won't pay any taxes on any earnings when you make a qualified withdrawal.[1]
- A wide range of investment options. Whether you would like some help making your investment choices or prefer to choose your own investments, the Program has a broad selection of options and services to help meet your needs.

Get your financial future rolling today

Enrolling in the Program is easy — just visit **empower.com/mta** and click on *Register* to get started.

Enroll now

Explore your other retirement income sources

While your pension and Social Security were never meant to provide your total retirement income, they are key parts of your overall savings strategy. So, it's important to know how much income you may collect when you become eligible. Visit **socialsecurity.gov** to see your benefits estimate, and for U.S. Railroad Retirement Board information, visit **rrb.gov**.

Have questions or need help?

- Seminars on various topics will be offered virtually, hosted by one of our dedicated retirement counselors. To learn more, click on the Awareness Month tile found on the **empower.com/mta**.
- Call Empower at **877-PLN-4MTA** (877-756-4682). Representatives are available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The automated phone system is available 24/7.

Enjoy the ride to your financial future with the MTA Deferred Compensation Program!

EMPOWER
Invest well. Live a little.™

1 Earnings on Roth 401(k) contributions will be taxed unless a withdrawal is a qualified distribution as defined by the IRS.

Name: 524735-01-SESFE-WF-3838487-0225_Email2
Subject: Get the help you need to reach the retirement you imagine
Preheader: Schedule a no-cost, one-on-one account review today

View online

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

MTA Deferred Compensation Program

Get help on your journey to a bright financial future

Meet with a retirement counselor for a personalized account review

Being able to reach the retirement destination you imagine requires careful planning. Fortunately, with the **MTA Deferred Compensation Program**, you don't have to go it alone. The Program offers personalized support from dedicated retirement counselors who are registered, local, and ready to help you every step of the way on your journey to retirement.

Get rolling with tax-advantaged savings

Your team of experienced retirement counselors can meet with you to answer your questions and provide the guidance you may need.

Whether you'd like general information about saving for retirement or just want to review the benefits of your plan, a retirement counselor can help. You can schedule a no-cost meeting with an on-site counselor to:

- Better understand the differences between the 401(k) Plan and the 457 Plan, and which one — or both — offers the features and benefits that may be best for you.
- Examine the advantages of pretax contributions versus Roth after-tax contributions and which approach to saving may be appropriate for your specific needs.
- Explore the Program's online tools and resources that can help improve your financial wellness and retirement readiness.
- Discuss the variety of investment options that are offered through the plan and get guidance making your investment decisions.
- Review your saving and investing strategy and get answers to your questions about your broader financial picture.

Your retirement counselors have your best interest in mind — their role is to assist you with your retirement plans. There are no fees for meeting with your retirement counselors.

Log in to empower.com/mta and click on *Meet your plan representatives* to schedule an appointment

Schedule your meeting

Speak with a representative today

Call Empower at **877-PLN-4MTA** (877-756-4682). Representatives are available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET. The automated phone system is available 24/7.

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Name: 524735-01-SESFE-WF-3838614-0225_Email3
Subject: Get rolling toward the retirement you imagine
Preheader: Put the power of online tools and resources to work for you

View online

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

MTA Deferred Compensation Program

Keep your financial future moving forward

Online tools and resources can help keep your savings strategy on track

The **MTA Deferred Compensation Program** provides you with interactive tools, calculators, and other resources to assist you on your personal journey towards retirement, while also benefiting you today.

Keep your retirement running on schedule

Start making the most of the Program's online tools and resources, including:

- **Budgeting and cash flow tools.** With the budgeting tool, you can create a detailed spending plan to help you take control of your money. And the cash flow tool shows you the difference between your income and expenses over time.
- **Net worth calculator.** Your net worth compares what you own (your assets) and what you owe (your liabilities). It provides a much better measure of your overall financial stability than only looking at your income alone.
- **Lifetime Income Score℠.** See if you're on track toward achieving your financial goals in retirement. The closer your score is to 100%, the closer you may be to your target monthly or annual retirement income.
- **Retirement Planner.** Get an estimate — in just five simple steps — of how much money you may need to retire comfortably.
- **Withdrawals-in-retirement calculator.** Understand the impact withdrawals may have on your retirement account so you can estimate how many years your savings may last.

Your retirement counselors have your best interest in mind — their role is to assist you with your retirement plans. There are no fees for meeting with your retirement counselors.

Log in today at empower.com/mta and start exploring the wealth of tools and resources available to you

Log in now

Get help from dedicated professionals

Our team of onsite retirement counselors can assist you in making the most of all the Program's tools and resources. Schedule a meeting by logging in to **empower.com/mta** and clicking on *Meet your plan representatives*.

For more information

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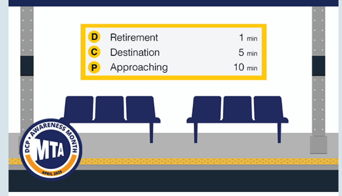
EMPOWER
Invest well. Live a little.

Name: MTA 524735-01-SESFE-WF-3838641-0225_DCPEmail4
Subject: Get your financial future on the right track — your plan can help!
Preheader: The MTA Deferred Compensation Program can help you get to the retirement you want

View online

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

MTA Deferred Compensation Program



Make sure you're ready to reach your retirement destination

Enhance your financial future with the MTA Deferred Compensation Program

Would you like a more balanced retirement? The **MTA Deferred Compensation Program** can help complete your "three-legged stool" of retirement income. Alongside your pension and Social Security (or Railroad Retirement Benefits), the Program can provide a crucial third source of savings, helping to stabilize your three-legged stool and helping you sit pretty in retirement.

See if your future is on the right track

Are you doing all you can to plan and save for the financial future you want? You may need to be saving more and taking other steps to ensure you're headed in the right direction.

This **financial wellness checklist** can help. It includes eight simple actions you can take to help keep your financial future moving forward. Enjoy the feeling of accomplishment you can get by completing some quick and easy to-dos that can help you reach your long-term goals.

Use the financial wellness checklist to help you reach your retirement destination

Access the checklist

Get your future rolling with a no-cost account review

Need some help preparing for your financial future? You have a direct line of access to dedicated Retirement Counselors who can take a holistic look at your overall financial situation. They can discuss your saving and investing strategy with you, answer your questions, and provide the guidance you may need.

Retirement counselors always have your best interest in mind, and there are never any fees for meeting with them. Visit **empower.com/mta** and click on *Meet your representatives* to schedule a one-on-one appointment.

Have questions or need help?

In addition to the MTA Deferred Compensation Program, your pension and Social Security (or Railroad Retirement Benefits) are key parts of your total retirement savings strategy. That's why it's important to know how much income you may collect when you become eligible. For a quick Social Security benefits estimate, visit **ssa.gov**. For U.S. Railroad Retirement Board information, visit **rrb.gov**.

For more information

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