

# Filling the Gap: Volunteer Transportation Programs



Prepared by the  
Sacramento Area Council of Governments

## Acknowledgements

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## Introduction

Beyond traditional private vehicles, taxis, walking, bicycling, and public transportation services such as heavy and light rail, bus transit, and paratransit/Dial-a-Ride services, the SACOG region is seeing an increasing array of transportation options for the region's residents:

- On-demand ridehailing services such as Transportation Network Companies Lyft and Uber; Sacramento Regional Transit's SmaRT Ride micro-transit services; and West Sacramento's Via Rideshare program
- Other shared mobility options including carshare, bikeshare, and scooter share
- Emerging transportation technologies such as fully automated vehicles, like the Olli shuttle piloted at Sacramento State University

Seemingly such a broad combination of transportation alternatives might fulfill most regional residents' transportation needs – as long as newer options prove economically viable and sustainable, become more widespread in suburban and rural areas of the region, and technologies such as automated buses and shuttles become publicly available.

However, even if all these modes were on offer, there would likely still be a transportation gap for some of the region's residents: the growing population of older adults in their 80s and 90s, those without the means to afford transportation services, and those with physical and/or cognitive limitations who require greater assistance than these options can provide.

Like many areas across the country, the SACOG region is aging. By 2040, those 65 and over are forecast by the California Department of Finance to be 1 of every 5 residents in Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties, nearly 1 in 4 in Placer county and 1 in 3 in El Dorado county. As older adults age, they may experience more physical limitations, illness, reduced reaction times, vision and/or hearing impairments, cognitive issues such as Alzheimers or dementia, disability, and general frailty that prevents them from safely driving. For these older adults, and younger people with similar disabilities, these limitations often inhibit the use of public transit and Dial-a-Ride services even where available.

However, having to continually ask for rides, or pay for a private taxi or TNC service on a limited income, leads some individuals to forego even essential trips, let alone social ones. This can result in increased isolation and poorer health. Isolation has been linked with increased mortality, higher risk for falls and hospital readmissions, and other adverse health outcomes. A recent study by Global Council on Brain Health (GCBH) also suggests that lack of social engagement increases the risks of cognitive decline and dementia.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Global Council on Brain Health, *The Brain and Social Connectedness: GCBH Recommendations on Social Engagement and Brain Health*, 2017, available at [www.GlobalCouncilOnBrainHealth.org](http://www.GlobalCouncilOnBrainHealth.org)

## Purpose of this Guide

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) received a Caltrans Transportation Planning Grant to assess opportunities for alternatives and improvements to existing public transportation services for seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income residents in more rural communities in El Dorado, Sutter, and Yuba Counties, where fixed-route and demand-response transit may be more limited and service is costly to provide.

Use of volunteers is one way to expand community transportation options. The Sacramento area has a number of volunteer transportation programs, but programs are not widespread across the region.

To help and encourage more communities to consider developing volunteer transportation programs to fill the gap, this guide synthesizes a range of information on volunteer transportation programs. It provides general guidance in Chapter 1; a variety of program examples within and outside the Sacramento region in Chapter 2; things to consider in planning a program in Chapter 3; and links to more resources in Chapter 4.

*“The best part of being a volunteer driver is that the investment of a small amount of time can make a huge positive impact on the life of someone who needs transportation.”<sup>2</sup>*



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<sup>2</sup> *Stories from the Road, Stories from the Heart*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, National Volunteer Transportation Center, 2014  
Used with permission from the National Volunteer Transportation Center.

## Chapter 1: Overview of Volunteer Transportation Programs

In hundreds of communities across the country, volunteers play a vital role in filling transportation gaps and increasing social engagement. A story each from *Passenger Stories of Gratitude* and *Stories from the Road, Stories of the Heart* begin to illustrate the myriad benefits of volunteer transportation to riders and volunteer drivers alike.

**Dorothy Gillette, age 95, rider:** I am a widow and all of my siblings and personal friends have passed away. One day a miracle occurred. A phone call led me to visit SRC, where they reconnected me with life outside my home by providing volunteer drivers. Volunteer drivers are the most amazing and greatest of all gifts. They provide transportation and comfort and reassurance in knowing I am not confined to my home. My volunteer driver is an angel in disguise. I am now able to go to my hairdresser once a week and to church on Sunday mornings. Consequently, I have begun to make new friends. Conversation and laughter occur while driving to and from destinations, which has led to new friendships. Recently my doctor prescribed an exercise class needed to increase my strength and stability. Steve stepped up and said he would support me and take me to the class. He is reliable and generous with his time and gives of himself willingly. His support provides me with happiness and joy. We have developed a very special friendship, and I can always depend on him to be there for me each week: rain or snow, he is there. Because of Steve, I can continue to be independent, healthy, and happy. My family is so grateful.<sup>3</sup>

**Owen Showalter, volunteer driver:** From the beginning of my being a driver for seniors who can no longer drive, for whatever the reason, the days and hours I spend with them have been, for me, a continual time of wonderment and learning. Their youthfulness, vigor, love of life and intelligence has inspired me.

When I review my calendar each day to see if it includes a trip to the doctor, market, Costco, etc., I smile, knowing that I will be spending time with some dear people, whom I very much enjoy. I am so blessed to have this opportunity... thank you to my driver clients for making our days brighter and fulfilled with all types of knowledge and thoughtful profound ideas.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Passenger Stories of Gratitude: Stories about Volunteer Driver Programs and Their Drivers*, published by National Volunteer Transportation Center in partnership with Toyota, 2018

<sup>4</sup> *Stories from the Road, Stories from the Heart*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, National Volunteer Transportation Center, 2014  
Both used with permission from the National Volunteer Transportation Center.



## Organizational Models of Programs

Volunteer transportation programs vary widely based on mission, history, community needs, and available resources. As a result, many different models exist for organizing a program. They can take the form of:

- A free-standing community-based program run purely by volunteers
- A separate regional, countywide, or local nonprofit
- A service of a larger organization, such as a senior center, Agency on Aging, or community/social service agency
- A program of a public transit agency or Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA)
- A city or county function
- A service of a faith or interfaith community
- A partnership or contractual arrangement between agencies
- A component of a larger care coordination program that helps older adults age in place
- A chapter or affiliate of a turnkey operation that supports a specific service model

The National Volunteer Transportation Center summarizes a number of other key differences between volunteer transportation programs:

Some provide transportation just for seniors, others serve a more varied clientele.  
Some provide service in rural areas, others in urban and suburban areas.  
Some have a large staff, others operate solely with volunteer support.  
Some only rely on volunteer drivers, others also hire paid drivers.  
Some have no budgeted expenses, others have budgets in the million-dollar range.  
Some reimburse volunteer drivers for mileage, others do not.  
Some provide rides for specific needs, others provide rides to special destinations.  
Some allow escorts to ride free, others mobilize drivers as escorts.  
Some use passenger vehicles only, others use a mixed fleet of vehicles.  
Some provide thousands of rides each year, others provide hundreds of rides.  
Some charge fees to passengers, others request donations from passengers.  
Some have tax support, grant funding, and accept donations, others initiate fundraisers.<sup>5</sup>

## Program Philosophies

Besides the trips themselves, volunteer transportation programs emphasize as a primary benefit the relationships that are built between volunteers and riders. However, underlying many of the differences in how services are actually provided are philosophies about the purpose and role of the transportation service. Some programs see themselves as contributing to independence and well-being by providing transportation of last resort or focusing on trips

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<sup>5</sup> <https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Exercise-Plan-a-Volunteer-Driver-ProgramLKD.pdf>



they see as meeting the greatest need, such as medical appointments or grocery shopping. Volunteer reimbursement programs are founded in the belief that riders remain more independent and connected if they find their own drivers. Some organizations see transportation as a component of an important, broader model of care, providing programs and services and building ongoing relationships with older adults that help them age in place and remain engaged, while emphasizing their worth in a society that tends increasingly to value youth.

## **Risk Management**

A further area of variation is risk management. Volunteer driver programs generally have a strong safety record but sponsors still have to manage risk. Some have a higher tolerance for risk. Others are much more rigorous when it comes to their role and policies for drivers and riders, driver vetting and training, level of volunteers' assistance to passengers, and insurance coverage.

## **Service Variations**

Volunteer transportation programs also take a wide range of approaches as to how services are provided and managed.

### **Programs vary on whether they offer rides:**

- Curb to curb, where the driver picks up and drops off the rider only at the curb
- Door to door, where the driver may escort the rider to and from the door of their home and/or destination
- Door through door, i.e., the driver collects the rider from their home and walks the rider in to their appointment or destination
- Fully escorted, where the driver accompanies the rider and provides assistance throughout the trip (e.g., waits with the rider for the doctor or helps with grocery shopping)

In some cases, volunteers also provide language assistance for riders with limited English proficiency, and/or companionship and other assistance beyond transportation.

### **Sponsors differ in their policies and what restrictions they place on:**

- rider eligibility
- service hours or days of the week
- geographic range
- trip distance
- trip purpose (e.g., medical only)
- the number of trips permitted in a specified time period
- the number of stops allowed in the course of a trip

- the maximum amount of subsidy or reimbursement allowed per trip or time period
- whether the driver may assist with shopping bags/packages and/or mobility devices
- who can be a volunteer driver (e.g., excluding family members or paid caregivers)

**Programs vary in how volunteers are recruited and rewarded. In different cases:**

- The sponsor agency recruits volunteers directly
- A separate volunteer organization(s) helps recruit volunteer drivers for the program
- Riders find their own volunteer drivers among family, friends, or neighbors
- Volunteers receive reimbursement, awards, recognition events, donated gifts or services, time credits, and/or other incentives to continue volunteering.

## Program Examples

The following chapter includes summaries of 15 volunteer transportation programs, including programs identified in the SACOG region. These examples were selected to illustrate a wide variety of program models and approaches, in the hope that they might inspire thought and creativity in others who may be considering designing and developing a program for their community.



## Chapter 2: An Array of Volunteer Transportation Models

As noted in Chapter 1, volunteer transportation programs take a myriad of forms, both large and small, in the Sacramento region and across the country. The following program summaries showcase a range of organizational approaches and the benefits and challenges of different models.

### Programs that Match Personal Rides

#### **MyRides, Placer County, California**

**Program of nonprofit county wide senior services agency, Seniors First in Auburn, California**

**Sponsoring Agency:** In addition to the MyRides program, Seniors First's services include Meals on Wheels, an adult day social program in two locations, information and assistance, Friendly Visiting and telephone reassurance programs, intake review for the Health Express medical transportation services through Placer County Transportation Agency (PCPTA), and a biannual Senior Resource guide with 25,000 copies published.

**How does it work?** MyRides is a donation-based volunteer program providing rides to and from medical appointments, public services, grocery stores, pharmacy, bank and other needed services throughout Placer County. All rides are contingent on driver availability and ride requests are not guaranteed availability. Rides are offered Monday through Sunday from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. Riders are asked to request rides two weeks in advance for best service. This does not preclude requesting a ride within the immediate two-week period. If a driver is not found for a specific ride the requester is notified and provided with options for alternative services by the Information and Assistance program.

**Who can ride?** Placer County residents over age 60, people under age 60 with a disability, and families with children age 0-5 who are unable to use conventional public transit. Riders with dementia are required to be accompanied by a caregiver. The rider must be ambulatory and able to access the vehicle independently. The program cannot transport individuals who require wheelchairs. Individuals using oxygen tanks must have portable tanks and be able to manage their own equipment.

**How do riders sign up?** Riders may call Seniors First and request an application form which can be sent via email or mail. Once the completed application is returned staff will review and enter the individual into the scheduling system and advise the rider of their approval for potential service.

**Is there a fee?** Riders are asked to contribute to the program. They are provided an envelope with a note inside advising them of suggested fees but are not denied if they are unable to contribute. The program also has grant funds to provide vouchers for individuals who cannot afford the costs associated with an occasional, necessary medical appointment.

**What's the usage?**

**Registered riders:** 900

**FY 2016/17 rides:** Over 6,000 one-way trips per year

**Volunteer drivers:** 63

**How does the program work for drivers?** Ride requests are entered into the “Ride Scheduler” database which is accessible to the volunteers and drivers to select the rides they would like to provide. Volunteers drive their personal vehicles. Volunteers are not required to physically assist clients or to remain with them during their appointments. In some instances, drivers will drive to the location and a second driver will make the return trip.

Volunteers are screened with background checks and references and required to maintain and verify an active driver’s license and insurance. Seniors First provides secondary insurance coverage. The program provides training in mandated reporting, safety measures, and program policy and procedure. Drivers may request reimbursement for their trips at the rate allowed by the IRS. If drivers do not request reimbursement, it is considered an in-kind donation to the MyRides program.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** The program is funded by the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency and Area 4 on Aging, and riders provide contributions to the service as noted above. Program funding is approximately \$218,000 per year. Seniors First also does fundraising throughout the year to support its programs.

**Benefits of this model:** MyRides has been operating for over 20 years successfully serving all of Placer County. Ride requests are taken via telephone, a model that works well for the aging population. The use of “Ride Scheduler” has improved the operational efficiency of the program.

**Challenges of this model:** There is never a time when 100% of the ride requests are covered by volunteers. The program is most successful for regularly scheduled appointments. Seniors First continues to reach out to the community for additional drivers. Volunteer recruitment is ongoing.

**Website:** <https://seniorsfirst.org/>

## Medical Appointment Rides, Winters, California

### Program of nonprofit Winters Senior Foundation

**Sponsoring Agency:** With the goal of providing opportunities for seniors in the town of Winters, the Winters Senior Foundation organizes education programs, game day, and free or low-cost events, plus medical transportation for seniors 55+.

**How does it work?** Volunteer drivers provide seniors rides for medical purposes: doctors' appointments, lab visits, hospital procedures, physical therapy, pharmacy needs, etc. Trips are primarily to medical facilities in Winters, Davis, Woodland, Dixon, Vacaville, and Fairfield. Riders must call for a ride at least 72 hours prior to the appointment time so there is time to seek an available driver. The Senior Foundation will also arrange to fund \$10 per year on a Connect Card for a senior to use Yolo County Transportation District's bus service.

**Who can ride?** Anyone age 55 or over who lives within the boundaries of the Winters Joint Unified School District. Riders must be able to transfer into a vehicle on their own; drivers do no lifting and do not enter homes. Walkers are okay, but not wheelchairs. If a rider cannot speak English or needs more help, s/he can bring along another person or caregiver.

**How do riders sign up?** Riders do not need to register, they simply call the Winters Senior Foundation at 707-497-7289 to schedule a ride.

**Is there a fee?** No. If a rider offers a donation, the driver turns it over to the Foundation.

**What's the usage? Last half of 2018:**

**Active riders:** About 8

**Total medical appointments served:** 45

**Volunteer drivers:** 10, with 2 bilingual

**Total miles driven:** About 1,000

**How does the program work for drivers?** As ride requests come in, a Foundation volunteer sends out an email to drivers asking who is available that day and arranges the ride with him/her and the rider. Volunteers drivers provide the Foundation with a DMV record and proof of insurance. Volunteers drive their own vehicles, and the Foundation has secondary insurance.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** The program had been purely volunteer, but received a grant for this year from the Woodland location of Waste Management.

**Benefits of this model:** The program serves a small town, emphasizing medical trips as the most important need.

**Challenges of this model:** The program is relatively new and still ramping up. Winters has about 1,000 seniors total, with 300-500 on the email list. Many people have other focuses in their lives, so it is taking some time to expand the volunteer pool. Most of the current volunteers are from the community and three are on the Senior Foundation Board, so already know each other.

## **Catholic Charities Senior Transportation Services, Stanislaus County, CA**

### **Program of Catholic Charities Diocese of Stockton**

**Sponsoring Agency:** Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Stockton provides a broad range of social services to people in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Alpine, and Mono counties, including programs for seniors, families, immigrants, and youth, and senior transportation programs in Stanislaus, San Joaquin, and Tuolumne Counties.

**How does it work?** In the Stanislaus County program, rides are provided by a mix of paid drivers and volunteers. Riders must call for a ride at least five days in advance, with requests taken on a first-come first-served basis. When staff believe they have filled all available ride slots for a given day, they begin a waiting list. Using a Filemaker Pro database, staff set up final ride schedules for the next day based on driver availability. While no rides are promised, staff do their best to see that everyone with a reservation obtains a ride, sometimes with a bit of adjustment or waiting. Staff report that they are able to fulfill most trips on the waiting list. Rides are generally provided weekdays between 8:30 am and 3:00 pm, including for grocery shopping. Newman, Patterson, and Oakdale residents are asked not to make appointments too early, since drivers come from Modesto, up to an hour away. Drivers can help riders from their door and with groceries, even with shopping if there is enough time, but do not assist with transfers in and out of vehicles.

**Who can ride?** Individuals age 60 or older who reside and receive medical care in Stanislaus County, live independently, but have no other means of transportation.

**How do riders sign up?** Callers go through an intake application with staff over the phone. The staff coordinator clarifies any information, reviews the applicant's assistance needs, cognitive abilities, and inability to use any other system such as public transit and/or paratransit service, before certifying eligibility. Riders are then approved for medical trips (including doctor's appointments, pharmacy trips, physical therapy, etc.), grocery shopping trips, or both.

**Is there a fee?** No, but donations are welcome.

#### **What's the usage?**

**Riders:** 332

**One-Way Rides provided:** 868 in January/February 2019

**Volunteer Drivers:** 9 active

**Volunteer hours:** 216.25 in January/February 2019

**Paid drivers:** 2

**How does the program work for drivers?** The Coordinator has a driver calendar showing which paid and volunteer drivers are available on which days. Schedules for the paid drivers are set first, then those for volunteers, including two who work pretty much full-time. Volunteers obtain their day's schedule by email or hard copy at the office. Paid drivers drive two agency-owned, wheelchair equipped vans. Volunteers may drive a third van or a car owned by the agency; others drive their personal vehicles. Drivers log their trips, which are verified by staff. Drivers are offered \$0.50/mile in reimbursement if they use their own car, although some decline. working on training.

Volunteer drivers are provided a Life Scan form for undergoing a background check and must bring in a printout of their driving record. Approved drivers then go through an orientation. Staff are also working on a volunteer training for wheelchair securement.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** Program costs include insurance, staffing, mileage reimbursement, and maintenance on the vans, but not indirect costs. Revenues come from contracts for the program with MOVE as the CTSA (see p. X), and Caltrans through the FTA 5310 program.

**Benefits of this model:** Staff sees the strength of this program as keeping seniors living independently as long as possible and increasing their overall well-being through providing a transportation option of last resort.

**Challenges of this model:** Staff's goal is to provide as many trips as possible, at least 26-30 trips/day or 500/month, but it is difficult to have enough volunteers available. They are working on volunteer driver recruitment through senior centers, libraries, events, Catholic parishes and other faith communities, but do not ask the religious affiliation of volunteers.

**Website:** <http://www.ccstockton.org/Home.aspx>

### **VetsGo and Carry-Out Caravan, Boulder County, Colorado**

**Programs of Cultivate, nonprofit organization serving seniors**

**Sponsoring Agency:** Cultivate's purpose is to help seniors in Boulder County flourish through active engagement with and active support of their community. Besides transportation, Cultivate connects seniors with volunteers for home repairs, yard maintenance, snow shoveling, and manages a hub of the national Retired Volunteers Service Program (RSVP). Cultivate offers two transportation-related programs: VetsGo and Carry-Out Caravan.

#### **VetsGo**

**How does it work?** VetsGo connects senior veterans and qualifying family members with a volunteer driver to escort them to and from medical appointments, including at Veterans Administration (VA) facilities in Colorado and Wyoming. Clients must call at least seven days ahead to make a ride request, with rides provided in volunteers' personal vehicles. Medical appointments are broadly defined, including doctors, chiropractors, acupuncture, mental health, dentists, massage, physical and pool therapy. If a scheduled ride cannot be provided due to driver illness or an emergency, Cultivate will reimburse the cost of a ride by taxi, Uber, or Lyft, except to VA facilities.

**Who can ride?** Veterans and their family members (defined as a spouse, parent, or adult child of a Veteran, whether living or deceased) who are age 60 and over, except those using a wheelchair or whose trips qualify for Medicaid transportation. Family members must reside in Boulder county, while Veterans may live in Boulder and other counties. Riders may use walkers, canes, oxygen, and companions may ride as well.



### **What's the usage?**

**VetsGo riders:** 215 enrolled, about 120 regular riders

**Monthly rides:** 80 (March 2019)

**Volunteer drivers:** about 50 enrolled, 35 regular drivers

**How does the program work for the VetsGo drivers?** Ride requests are posted on an on-line bulletin board. Volunteer drivers consult the bulletin board and sign up for rides to provide based on their schedule and preferences. Cultivate then generates an email confirming they have each ride. At least a dozen drivers give rides once a week or more. Drivers use their personal vehicles with Cultivate carrying supplemental insurance. Although some decline, drivers are offered mileage reimbursement of \$0.35/mile for trips within Boulder county; if out of county the reimbursement rate is \$0.50/mile. Cultivate also offers a “vehicle maintenance fee” for rides provided to VA facilities: \$25.00 for Colorado locations, and \$40.00 for Wyoming facilities. Drivers tend to carry only one passenger, but occasionally riders’ schedules at a facility will coincide. All rides are logged into a main database, including mileage and hours, and Cultivate issues monthly driver reimbursement checks.

Drivers undergo a background check and must keep updated car insurance and driver’s license information on file. Cultivate on-boards new volunteers all the time. Staff reviews a checklist with them, and provides basic training including how to use the on-line bulletin board and database, and a handbook to read.

### **Carry-Out Caravan**

**How does it work for volunteers and recipients?** Carry-Out Caravan provides help with grocery shopping for those 60 and over who cannot reliably get to the store themselves and access groceries. There are two shopping days per week – Tuesdays in Longmont, and Thursdays in Boulder. The day prior to each shopping day is order day. Volunteers come to Cultivate’s office and via dedicated phone lines take grocery orders. Seniors may also email in their orders before 3:00 pm. They are asked to organize their order by grocery type (produce, dairy, frozen, meat, bakery, etc.). Shoppers will not pick up alcohol, tobacco, or prescriptions.

On shopping days, volunteers arrive at partner King Sooper at 6:00 am to shop and fill the orders. The grocery store dedicates a self-service aisle to the program. Volunteers double-check each order and act as checkers. A store employee dedicated to the program then completes the payment transaction for each order using the client’s credit, debit, or Quest (EBT) card information on-file with Cultivate. Following the shopping trip, volunteer drivers arrive to pick up and deliver the grocery orders to the various recipients. Some volunteers bring in the groceries, help put them away, and stay to talk with the elder, providing social connection and a more personal touch.

**What's the usage?** About 110 orders/week, with about 60-70 volunteers

**How do program users sign up?** Cultivate has an enrollment packet for all programs, including VetsGo and Carry-Out Caravan. When people call a program, if they are eligible, they

receive the packet by mail or email to fill out and return. Cultivate then enrolls them in their database and calls the client to confirm that they can now request service.

**Is there a fee?** No, but donations are accepted.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** Each program has a dedicated staff person, from a total of nine staff. Costs are covered by grants and donations.

**Benefits of this model:** Cultivate has had some volunteers and volunteer drivers for years, and staff, volunteers, and clients have a lot of interaction and develop personal relationships. Most Carry-Out Caravan clients are in their 80s or 90s. The fact that the service is free and personal works well for them, ensuring they have groceries and some social contact.

**Challenges of this model:** As with many programs recruiting enough volunteers is a challenge, and some leave for the winter or summer. Cultivate advertises, tables at events, and works through senior centers and other nonprofits, but with outreach sometimes gets more new clients than volunteers.

Cultivate has a small staff but they end up doing some of the shopping and delivery for Carry-Out Caravan. To streamline the grocery orders, staff have discussed developing some form of on-line ordering, or creating an app that lists groceries in order by grocery aisle to speed shopping. The service also does not cover things like large bags of dog food that may be too heavy for volunteers to lift.

For VetsGo, staff also occasionally drives if a driver cancels and the appointment (such as dialysis) cannot be rescheduled. With its focus on veterans Cultivate anticipates increasing numbers of trips to VA facilities, which involve greater volunteer trip distances and time compared with local medical appointments.

**Website:** <https://cultivate.ngo/>



## Programs where Volunteers Drive Agency-Owned Vehicles

### ACC Rides Transportation Services, Sacramento, California

Program of nonprofit Asian Community Center

**Sponsoring Agency:** The Asian Community Center, or “ACC Senior Services,” was founded in 1972 to identify, develop, and provide culturally sensitive health and social services for older adults. Besides transportation, ACC provides programs including Meals on Wheels, All Seasons Cafe lunch sites, lifelong learning classes, senior employment training, caregiver support services, senior apartments, assisted living, and a skilled nursing facility.

**How does it work?** ACC Rides provides door-to-door transportation service to reach medical and dental appointments, shopping, other senior centers, eight All Seasons Cafe sites, and the ACC Campus. ACC Rides also provides shuttle service for churches and community special events (e.g., Buddhist Church of Sacramento and Chinese Community Church festivals and Chinese Grace Bible Church services). Volunteer drivers, supplemented by some paid staff, use a fleet of wheelchair accessible buses and minivans, acquired through FTA 5310 Projects or loaned from Paratransit Inc., to provide shared rides. ACC Rides also owns one sedan and one minivan, and the Area Agency on Aging loaned a 10-passenger van and sedans for ambulatory riders and field trips.

Riders may book rides one month in advance, or if there is availability, before noon for the following day. Occasionally, a same day ride request may be accommodated if a vehicle and driver is available. Many drivers and driver escorts speak a second language, including Cantonese, Mandarin, Japanese, Hmong, Vietnamese, Spanish and Tagalog, which helps accommodate riders with limited English proficiency.

**Who can ride?** People age 60 and over who live in the following zip code areas, 95814, 95818, 95820, 95822, 95823, 95824, 95828, 95831, 95832, 95758, and part of the Delta Region (Walnut Grove, Locke, Hood/Franklin and Courtland) in Sacramento County.

**How do riders sign up?** Riders complete a one-page form providing personal details, and mobility and language assistance needs.

**Is there a fee?** ACC Ride asks for voluntary contributions of \$1.00 from riders going to All Seasons Café sites, and \$5.00 for other services.

#### What's the usage?

**Riders:** 2,931

**Rides:** About 4,000/month, not including Buddhist church shuttle

**Volunteer drivers:** 87

**Mileage:** 75-100 miles/vehicle/day

**How does the program work for the drivers?** Volunteers only drive agency vehicles. Drivers generally volunteer once a week, contributing a total of about 800-900 hours of volunteer time per month. The most common destination is to All Seasons Cafe sites, dialysis treatment, and

shopping. If requested, drivers help riders carry groceries to the house. If volunteers work over five hours a day, they receive a free lunch, ordered by ACC staff from places like Subway and L&L Hawaiian Barbeque (lunch costs about \$6.00 per volunteer). Volunteers and staff go through a background check, the DMV Pull Program, and are required to attend in-service training on such topics as transporting seniors and disabled persons (including wheelchair securement), operating ACC's vehicles, assisting riders with dementia, and programs such as AARP's Safe Driver.

ACC Rides Automobile insurance is through Nonprofits United. They provide other trainings such as Vehicle Safety Operation and behind-the-wheel instruction for drivers.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** ACC Rides has 15 part-time and full time staff. The budget covers not only administration of the volunteer driver program, but also paid drivers who complement the volunteer drivers. Paid drivers transport residents who reside in senior housing facilities. ACC Rides also has an agreement with Paratransit, Inc. to help with Paratransit overflow, using two CNG buses. ACC receives an annual grant of \$160,000 from the Area 4 Agency on Aging, a Federal Transit Administration 5310 grant of \$150,000 annually for three drivers and a program coordinator staff positions, and receives contributions from riders of about \$50,000/year.

**Benefits of this model:** ACC Rides caters to an older, fragile population for whom walking to the nearest bus stop can be a challenge due to their limited mobility. Most riders do not have a cell phone, let alone a smart phone, which is needed for calling other transportation providers. The program serves those with limited English proficiency, which otherwise makes it difficult for them to communicate their transportation needs. The program reports having dedicated volunteers of various races and ethnicities but tends to see more volunteers from Asian backgrounds wanting to help people, especially those who do not speak English fluently. ACC Rides now has some staff and drivers who speak Vietnamese, so there has been an influx of Vietnamese-speaking riders.

**Challenges of this model:** When volunteer drivers go for long vacations to escape the cold or heat during winter and summer, it reduces the volunteer pool. Also, volunteers are getting older and some do not feel comfortable driving as much. They tend to reduce their driving hours but are still willing to help for special events or other non-driving activities. Recruitment is largely through word of mouth; when a volunteer driver stops driving, often they will share their experiences with friends who then become volunteer drivers. ACC also advertises through the ACC website and reaches out to families of those who use the service.

ACC Rides has been scheduling 200-250 rides per day manually, which requires one full-time person to complete the schedule and another two or three staff to put together paper routes of 15-18 driver schedules. ACC Rides is looking at different software packages to facilitate ride scheduling in a more efficient way.

**Website:** <https://www.accsv.org/>

## **Woodland Community Care Car, Woodland, California**

### **All-volunteer transportation nonprofit**

**Sponsoring Agency:** Woodland Community Care Car is a nonprofit run solely by volunteers since 1973 to provide transportation services in Woodland.

**How does it work?** Care Car provides van transportation for older adults to reach lunch at the Senior Center, medical and other appointments, shopping, errands, and leisure activities within Woodland city limits. Transportation is available Monday through Friday, 8:00 am-3:00 pm, and Sunday mornings for religious service attendance. Reservations may be made up to four months in advance for medical appointments and 1-7 days in advance for all other trips. Care Car tries to keep mornings open for doctors' appointments, with some exceptions. Reservations may be made for only one destination per day, but there is no cap on the number of rides someone can take. Similar to many complementary ADA paratransit services, riders are given a half hour window from 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after their scheduled pick-up time. Drivers will wait up to 5 minutes for the rider, otherwise it is deemed a no-show.

**Who can ride?** People age 55 and over. Riders may use a cane or walker but must be able to board the van on their own. Caregivers are allowed to accompany riders.

**How do riders sign up?** Age-eligible riders just call in and provide their name, address, and phone number in Woodland.

**Is there a fee?** A donation of \$2.00 is requested round-trip but not required.

#### **What's the usage?**

**Rides:** About 8,000/year

**Volunteer drivers:** About 150

**How does the program work for drivers?** Volunteers drive one of four agency-owned vans. Volunteers usually work one to two times per month. Two vans go out at 8:00 am until about 11:15 am, with four rides scheduled per hour. A daily lunch van picks up a dozen or so people for the Chit Chat Café (Meals on Wheels site) at the Senior Center and then takes them home.

Riders must be able to get in and out of the van on their own. However, outside of the lunch van, there is always a helper on board for support and help to put packages and shopping bags (limit is 30 lbs.) in the back of the van. If there are full van-loads, the helper could be in and out of the vehicle many times, so drivers and helpers have between 11:15/11:20 and 1:00 to eat lunch and rest. The 1:00-3:00 pm time is for some new rides and return trips. Last pick-ups are about 2:30 so vehicles may be returned to the Woodland Senior Center by 3:00, where the next day's drivers are making up the following day's schedule and are ready for the phone and keys. Vehicles are kept at the Center overnight.

Drivers are vetted by submitting their driver's license and a check through Care Car's insurance company. Care Car cannot afford background checking but in a small community, many of the volunteers are known as neighbors and friends.

Volunteers also develop the ride schedules by hand. Two people schedule the drivers by the month. They call volunteer drivers to work certain days in a month and schedule the helpers. The volunteer prints out the schedule and gets them to the drivers and helpers in hard copy or by email. There are no reminder calls/texts to riders, only to volunteers. Have an extra car in case of need.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** A federal grant provides help with insurance through California Fleet Auto Insurance and Nonprofits Insurance Alliance of CA. Otherwise Care Car relies on contributions from individuals, civic groups, and businesses, families in memory of a loved one, and memorial donations from estates. Most vehicles were bought locally. A local dealer donated one vehicle with his dealership name on the side and provides maintenance. Some gas stations will provide discounts on gasoline.

**Benefits of this model:** The model has worked well without a lot of problems. Volunteers can drive any of their vans. Care Car selected Ford Transit and Econoline vans that riders can get in and out of comfortably, with room for packages.

The Board has been largely consistent over time. The volunteers are found to be excellent people. Most drivers and helpers get along well and some work together for a number of years.

**Challenges of this model:** Due to service hours, those with appointments in the afternoon may have to find their own way home. Also, Care Car can only provide so many rides per day so have to turn down some requests. As a result, Care Car had to change rules, especially concerning no-shows. If a rider cancels three times at their door, they are now restricted from riding because of demand.

As an all-volunteer organization, Care Car does not have a regular budget, although funds are needed to pay for gas, van maintenance, and periodically van replacement. However, because Woodland is a small community, over the years many individuals and businesses have helped the organization with support to continue providing service.

**Website:** <http://www.communitycarecar.org/>





## **Via Volunteer Driver Program, Boulder County, Colorado**

### **Program of mobility management nonprofit, Via Mobility Services**

**Sponsoring Agency:** Via is a nonprofit mobility manager offering paratransit, travel training, information and referral, and volunteer driver programs. Through its social enterprise model, Via earns contract income from operating Access-a-Ride, FlexRide, and Boulder Hop services, which helps fund its core mobility programs.

**How does it work?** Via's volunteer driver program provides trips within Boulder County for any purpose. Rides may be requested 1-7 days in advance; some are made same-day. Via chooses whether to place each trip with paratransit or a volunteer driver. Both paratransit and volunteers provide door through door assistance. Via tries to fill up routes with paid paratransit drivers first, then assign overflow or unusual rides to volunteers. The program has enough volunteers that drivers can help cover Via paratransit denials, escort riders during an appointment, or drive into another county that a paid paratransit driver can't serve. With county funding, Via also began a new route in Estes Park where there was a 20% paratransit denial rate. Volunteers now drive on Mondays and Wednesdays and a paid driver on Fridays. Via also received a small grant in coordination to take Broomfield EZRide clients to Boulder County for medical and therapy appointments.

**Who can ride?** People age 60+, with or without a disability, who have qualified for paratransit service and are deemed suitable by Via for volunteer trips.

**How do riders sign up?** Riders must go through the paratransit eligibility process.

**Is there a fee?** Fare is \$5.00/one-way, \$10 town to town.

#### **What's the usage?**

**2018 Riders:** 757

**2018 rides:** 4,179 one-way trips

**Volunteer drivers:** about 30, average 17-20/month

**2018 total miles:** 32,257

**How does the program work for drivers?** Volunteer drivers commit to four hours or more per week. They drive Via's fleet of 10 Prius hybrids, or some out of Boulder, Longmont, or Lafayette use their own vehicles with reimbursement of \$0.50/mile if they accept. Via already had Route Match software for paratransit so had them come out and help set it up for the volunteer program, too. Via now uses Route Match to assign routes to both fleet and personal vehicles available during each timeframe. Staff keeps a calendar of which volunteers are scheduled or have requested time off, so that routes can be assigned or closed down in the rare event that a driver is unavailable. New volunteers in training can be assigned to fill gaps. Volunteer drivers have a password-protected portal where they can go in the night before and see or print out their route. Drivers either have a home tablet or pick it up with their fleet vehicle to follow their assigned route and perform the trips like paid drivers.



Volunteer drivers go through background checks, drug testing, a passenger assistance class, and Defensive Driver class on-line. Via runs motor vehicle records twice a year. Volunteers who drive their own cars must have good insurance (Via does not supplement) and have a yearly vehicle inspection by Via's head mechanic.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** Via owns the fleet Priuses outright through grants and business/corporation donations. Program costs include staff time to run the program; insurance, fuel and maintenance for the Priuses; and volunteer recognition lunches. Funding comes from fares, grants, donations, and earnings from Via's social enterprise contracts.

**Benefits of this model:** In shifting from the initial model where volunteers selected trips ad hoc, Via has found they can provide more trips with fewer volunteers by using "routes" and regular schedules. Now volunteers work 4-8 hours, and average 3.01 rides per hour, better than paratransit at 2 trips/hour. With the route system volunteers often drive the same riders over and over and are able to build friendships and life-long connections, even with neighbors they didn't know beforehand. Via was also fortunate in that they already owned the Prius fleet from the paratransit program.

**Challenges of this model:** The paid drivers were originally concerned that volunteers might be there to take their jobs. Now that they understand they are there to help fill gaps, they think the volunteers are great.

**Website:** <https://viacolorado.org/>

### **VetsVan, Stanislaus County, California**

#### **Program of nonprofit Consolidated Transportation Services Agency MOVE**

**Sponsoring Agency:** MOVE was designated as the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) for Stanislaus County in 2010. Besides its volunteer transportation programs, MOVE offers travel training for using public transit for any interested county resident and establishes ADA paratransit eligibility for four different paratransit systems across the County. MOVE also operates BRIDGES, discussed in the later section with Reimbursement Program examples.

**How does it work?** VetsVan is a service that MOVE provides in partnership with Stanislaus County's Area Agency on Aging and Veterans Service Office (VSO). Volunteer drivers provide rides to medical appointments for veterans who have limited mobility. Volunteers drive wheelchair-accessible vans to Veterans Administration medical facilities in Stockton, Livermore, Palo Alto, Fresno, Merced, or other locations for medical appointments. Rides are provided Monday through Friday when volunteers are available. MOVE asks for two weeks' notice and rarely turns down a ride request. Most tend to be one-rider trips, but if there are similar ride requests occasionally a trip is shared.

**Who can ride?** Riders are Veterans residing in Stanislaus County or disabled Veterans who have had a loss of independence and are unable to independently ride public transit or VA Shuttle buses due to their medical condition.

**How do riders sign up?** Veterans must call MOVE and complete an eligibility intake form over the phone.

**Is there a fee?** No, services are free to riders

**How does the program work for the drivers?** Volunteer drivers drive County-owned, wheelchair-equipped vans. MOVE provides a uniform shirt, jacket, and driver badge, and offers \$10 in meal money to drivers with rides outside Stanislaus County. Drivers must pass a background check (provided free by the County), and participate in an Orientation, wheelchair securement training, and a one-day Defensive Driver Course within the first year.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** MOVE has a total of seven staff, with one each dedicated to the VetsVan and BRIDGES programs. Program costs include staffing, fuel, van washing, driver clothing and meal payments, and events. County-owned VetsVans are insured and maintained in collaboration with Stanislaus County's Area Agency on Aging. For any future vehicles, MOVE will be responsible for insurance and maintenance. Funding comes from Local Transportation Funds (LTF), various competitive Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) grants and County Measure L dollars.

**Website:** <http://www.movestanislaus.org/>



**Another example:** Yolo County has one Veterans Service Van, provided and serviced by the Veterans Administration (VA) and driven by volunteer drivers. Veterans may be picked up at home in Woodland, Davis, West Sacramento, or Winters, or meet the van at the Woodland office for free rides to and from the VA's Mather or McClellan medical facilities in Sacramento.

## Mileage Reimbursement Programs

### **BRIDGES, Stanislaus County, California**

#### **Programs of nonprofit Consolidated Transportation Services Agency MOVE**

**Sponsoring Agency:** As noted in the VetsVan description above (p. 19), MOVE was designated as the CTSA for Stanislaus County in 2010 and operates VetsVan and BRIDGES.

**How does it work?** BRIDGES is a mileage reimbursement program where eligible participants find their own volunteers to drive them to appointments, the grocery store, social activities, etc. in their personal vehicles. Rides must generally be within Stanislaus County. For any medical trips to the Bay Area (e.g., Livermore, Palo Alto, Stanford, UC San Francisco), riders must obtain preapproval and submit verification of their visit to receive reimbursement. Riders track trips and miles and submit them at the end of each month. MOVE reimburses the rider by check at \$0.50/mile for allowed trips. The rider then reimburses their driver(s). Riders are given a maximum monthly mileage limit depending on need, e.g., dialysis clients may have higher limits given their treatment needs. MOVE is in the process of developing an online system for tracking and reimbursing mileage.

**Who can ride?** Riders must have a disability and need door through door assistance.

**How do riders sign up?** Potential riders fill out and email, fax, or mail in an application form. A committee reviews each application to determine eligibility.

#### **How does the program work for the drivers?**

Volunteer drivers can be family members, friends, neighbors, and others age 21 or over. Each rider may have up to three drivers, and it is up to the rider to vet and choose their drivers. Volunteer drivers provide information and sign a hold harmless agreement for MOVE, as do riders. Drivers and riders then arrange rides at times convenient to both. If a rider cannot find a driver, MOVE makes suggestions or refers them to Catholic Charities.

**Benefits of this model:** In an area where volunteer numbers are smaller, the BRIDGES model provides seniors with more independence by encouraging them to find their own drivers.

**Challenges of this model:** BRIDGES requires the submission of monthly mileage forms, which are sometimes difficult for riders to complete. Some drivers will help, or staff sometimes needs to provide assistance.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** MOVE has a total of seven staff, with one each dedicated to the VetsVan and BRIDGES programs. Program costs include staffing, reimbursements, and events. Funding comes from Local Transportation Funds (LTF), various competitive Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) grants and County Measure L dollars.

**Website:** <http://www.movestanislaus.org/>

## Transportation Reimbursement Escort Program, San Bernardino County, CA Program of CTSA within public transit agency Omnitrans

**Sponsoring Agency:** Omnitrans, a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) of the County of San Bernardino and cities within, is the public transit agency serving the San Bernardino Valley. Omnitrans became the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) in 2016. As the CTSA, Omnitrans offers several specialized transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities, including travel training, a taxi and Lyft subsidy program, and the Transportation Reimbursement Escort Program (TREP).

**How does it work?** TREP is a reimbursement-only program, offering 40 cents per mile for escorted volunteer trips. Riders find their own volunteer drivers(s), which can include family members, caregivers, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. Rides can be for any purpose, including medical appointments, grocery shopping, hairdresser, and social visits.

Riders report their volunteer-driven rides to TREP via a standard paper form. TREP staff then uses a system created by Sacramento's Paratransit, Inc. to manage the data. The system helps staff keep client information, enter the rider's trips from their forms, and calculate mileage up to the maximum 200 miles/month. The system generates a csv file for ACH payments which are released by the Director and deposited electronically into the rider's checking account. The rider then reimburses their driver(s) by check or cash.

**Who can ride?** Persons with disabilities on the east side of San Bernardino Valley are served directly by Omnitrans, while its partner Community Senior Services administers the program in the western portion of the Valley. Riders do not have to meet ADA standards but must demonstrate that in some capacity they need help for transportation and assistance, such as escort into a medical appointment, help with grocery shopping, carrying packages, etc. There are no age restrictions, although the program largely serves riders age 16 and over. There is a limit of two riders per household, with an exception for group homes where there are unrelated individuals. Individuals may not be both a driver and rider.

**How do riders sign up?** Riders submit an application providing information on their abilities and needs. If the rider is already registered with Omnitrans' ADA service, TREP can usually use that application, or accepts documents from several other disability programs as verification, such as existing reduced fare ID. Riders must also have an active checking account for electronic deposits.

**Is there a fee?** No, TREP reimburses the rider for trips driven by their volunteers.

### **What's the usage?**

**Riders:** 85-90/month

**Rides:** 1,000-1,200/month

**Volunteer drivers:** Unknown number

**Mileage:** Up to 200 miles per month per rider

**How does the program work for the drivers?** TREP assumes riders will verify volunteer drivers' insurance. Drivers must still sign up with TREP, provide a photocopy of their valid California driver license, and sign a driver agreement agreeing to follow TREP's policies and waive all liability on the part of Omnitrans.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** Omnitrans receives two percent of Senior and Disabled Transit Service funds from San Bernardino County's Measure I half-cent transportation sales tax measure to fund CTSA operations and programs, including TREP. Measure I funds are supplemented by former JARC/New Freedom funds, with the CTSA likely to pursue FTA 5310 funds as those dry up.

**Benefits of this model:** TREP follows the philosophy that guided one of the earliest reimbursement programs, TRIP, begun in Riverside; namely, that having elders find their own drivers helps them stay more independent and connected with others in their community. They can pick volunteer drivers they feel comfortable with and are able to offer reimbursement towards gas and maintenance in return for the ride. Riders and drivers can schedule the trip at their mutual convenience, 24/7, with the rider receiving escort help as needed.

For Omnitrans, this format also keeps program costs low. Staff's role is primarily limited to enrollment, entering trip data and issuing reimbursements. The average trip costs \$5.00-\$7.00, compared with ADA service at \$28 or more per trip. The monthly cap at 200 miles keeps maximum reimbursement costs to \$80.00 per month per rider, with no additional costs for supplementary driver insurance or volunteer recruitment/management. Omnitrans is still building a method to track the impact of TREP on complementary ADA paratransit ridership.

**Challenges of this model:** Riders must have a checking account and use electronic deposit for reimbursement. TREP staff recommend that riders report rides from one driver per month. It is still the rider's choice, but limiting to one driver helps simplify reimbursement, since the rider doesn't have to figure out which driver is owed what and provide separate checks or cash amounts to different individuals. Staff encourages riders and drivers to resolve any issues on their own, but occasionally staff is called on to investigate a dispute or will do an audit if they see something random or odd concerning one of their clients.

**Website:** <http://www.omnitrans.org/getting-around/transit-services/special-transportation-services/>

**Another example:** Via Mobility in Boulder, Colorado, also offers mileage reimbursement in addition to its other volunteer transportation programs (see p. 18). The mileage reimbursement program is particularly designed to provide transportation in Boulder County outside of normal operating hours/days, such as during early mornings, late evenings, and on weekends. Riders must be Boulder County residents over age 60 or have a temporary or permanent disability regardless of age. Drivers may be family members, neighbors, caregivers, etc. Reimbursements are capped at \$100/month. Via reimburses a maximum of \$12.50 one-way or \$25.00 round-trip

for trips outside Boulder County to the Denver metro area; these must be for medical reasons and count against the \$100 monthly maximum.

## **Programs with a Broader Care Coordination Approach**

### **Ride with Pride, Solano County, California**

**Program of nonprofit Faith in Action: Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of Solano County**

**Sponsoring Agency:** Faith in Action began in Solano County in 1998 through a start-up grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Faith in Action Initiative. It incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2000. Faith in Action helps the homebound remain at home for as long as possible, improve their health by reducing isolation, and maintain their independence and dignity. Programs include transportation, senior counseling, and caregiver respite, whereby care recipients are matched with a volunteer in their city to provide services such as escort to medical/social service appointments, grocery shopping, errands, light chores, home visits, respite for family caregivers, referrals, and other assistance.

**How does it work?** The Ride with Pride program provides volunteer-driven rides in personal vehicles. Seniors with an appointment must call 24-48 hours in advance to book a ride, which is scheduled by staff. Some volunteers shuttle riders, transporting up to four people on a pre-determined route for pick-ups and drop-offs. About half of rides are for medical care, with the other half for grocery shopping, errands, and leisure activities, but rides will not be provided to work sites. Shuttle drivers will let other riders wait a few minutes to help a rider take their groceries to the door and prevent potential falls. Shuttle rides are first-come, first-served and riders are asked for their appointment length for route scheduling. Enrollees are told that medical rides are prioritized, so if a rider is booked to go to the bank but another senior has a doctor's appointment, staff will ask the person with the bank appointment to reschedule. Staff also work daily with medical facilities to change appointments to coincide with ride availability and reduce ride denials. Sometimes drivers form close relationships with individuals or a group of riders who request that driver specifically if possible.

Alternative, some volunteers are matched as regular drivers to seniors who are frail, have doctor's appointments, and need door through door assistance and attention. In those cases, when the rider finds out their appointment time, s/he calls their volunteer driver to arrange for the trip, and the volunteer lets Faith in Action know afterward by email or timesheet about the ride and appointment length.

Most requests for rides to medical appointments outside Solano County are denied due to lack of drivers willing to leave the County. Exceptions are Dixon residents, who can request rides to medical appointments in Davis, Woodland, and Vacaville, and Rio Vista seniors who can obtain rides to appointments in Antioch, Fairfield, and Vacaville through a partnership with the City of



Rio Vista. Drivers can request mileage reimbursement when providing rides; the mileage rate paid is whatever the current rate is allowed by the IRS.

**Who can ride?** Ambulatory seniors who can no longer drive are eligible for Ride with Pride, unless they have Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia. Over 85% of riders are at or near the poverty level. The Senior Peer Counseling Program also offers transportation to and from group counseling or individual therapy sessions, and respite caregivers may provide individual rides for their care recipients.

**How do riders sign up?** For the first ride or service, new recipients can call in and register by phone. Before they can receive the second ride or service, they must fill out and return paperwork provided by Faith in Action. Once in any program, Faith in Action can easily add to the individual's file if further services are needed.

**Is there a fee?** A \$5.00 donation is requested per round trip but not required.

**What's the usage?**

**Riders:** 400 registered for transportation, 823 total enrollees **Total rides:** About 7,000/year

**Volunteers:** 150 for all programs

**Total miles:** 18,734

**How does the program work for drivers?** Although the agency has one vehicle, volunteers prefer to drive their own cars. Mileage reimbursement is available but almost no one requests it. Faith in Action asks all volunteers to commit to at least 4 hours per week but the actual time commitment varies senior to senior. For the shuttle program, volunteer drivers take a shift, usually 8:30-1:30. For drivers providing one-to-one transportation, a single trip could take the whole four hours for that week, or the commitment could be 5-6 hours for a dialysis client who needs companionship.

Drivers provide their driver's license number for a driving record check and go through a background check. The volunteer's insurance is primary, supplemented by agency insurance from the Nonprofit Insurance Association of California. Supervisors also call volunteers individually on a quarterly rotation to check in, see how their experience is, and try to meet their needs to keep them motivated. Faith in Action also hosts a volunteer dinner and gets thank you cards from seniors to pass on to volunteers.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** Faith in Action's budget is about \$415,000 per year. Costs include three staff at offices in Vacaville and Fairfield, supplementary insurance, operations, volunteer appreciation, staff training, workshops, and outreach. Funding for the various programs comes from Solano County (Mental Health), the Solano Transportation Authority, Caltrans, California Department of Aging, City of Vacaville (in-kind office space), Napa/Solano Area Agency on Aging, and Kaiser Permanente.

**Benefits of this model:** Faith in Action is based in a "service provision through relationship" model that not only reduces senior's isolation and improves health and quality of life, but also emphasizes the value and worth to the larger community of older adults and their wisdom and



experiences. Half of Faith in Action's volunteers are not in a faith community but are still attracted by the spiritual component and guiding principles of service, compassion, and creating a better world, and value the relationships they build with riders or care recipients.

**Challenges of this model:** Volunteers are fewer in the smaller areas like Dixon and Rio Vista so ride denial rates can be higher, and increasing congestion is also a deterrent for some drivers. Some medical offices are better than others in (re)scheduling appointments to take ride availability into account. Estimating appointment lengths can also be challenging for ride scheduling, especially for those receiving dialysis, radiation, or other treatment. Ride demands are increasing but not necessarily the funds and volunteer pool to meet those needs. Faith in Action has a dedicated staff person who spends at least half their time recruiting volunteers for the various programs through senior centers, faith communities, fliers, tabling, social media, etc., and staff also continue to seek funding and partnerships for supporting its services.

**Website:** <https://www.faithinactionsolano.org/>

### **Seniors A Go Go, San Diego, California**

**Program of care coordination nonprofit, ElderHelp of San Diego**

**Sponsoring agency:** ElderHelp's mission is to help seniors age in place and maintain their independence. Serving 37 zip codes in the mid, north, east, and peninsula/beach areas of San Diego County, ElderHelp offers transportation, care coordination, and case management services, as well as support for employed caregivers and a HomeShare program, which matches older adults wishing to stay in their homes with adults of any age seeking a room to rent or a room in exchange for some assistance around the house.

**How does it work?** ElderHelp's transportation program, Seniors a Go Go, provides rides within a 15-mile radius one-way. Rides may be curb to curb, door to door, or door through door, based on client assessment and need. There are no day or hour limitations. Reservations may be made from seven up to 30 days in advance, for up to eight round-trip rides per month. Rides may be for any purpose except to surgical appointments or for pick-up from surgery using anesthesia.

**Who can ride?** Service area residents age 60 and over. Clients may use Seniors A Go Go alone, or as part of the Care Coordination Program. Riders must be able to transfer into a car on their own, possibly with an arm for balance support. Canes and walkers are permitted but not wheelchairs.

**How do riders sign up?** Seniors A Go Go clients enroll via the phone and a completed application. Care Coordination clients go through a phone assessment followed by a home visit. ElderHelp will also help clients with other services they might qualify for, such as Medi-Cal transportation.

**Is there a fee?** No, all services are offered on a donation basis.

**What's the usage?**

**Active riders:** About 100 for Seniors A Go Go alone, 200-350 Care Coordination clients

**2017 rides:** Over 8,000

**Volunteer drivers:** 60-70, total volunteers around 400

**How does the program work for the drivers?** Volunteers drive their personal vehicles on their own schedule, including weekend trips for those who work weekdays. Volunteers may assist with grocery shopping every other week (or sometimes weekly) for two hours, preferably taking the client with them to shop and socialize. Volunteers may opt for mileage reimbursement or use miles as a tax deduction if applicable. Volunteers are vetted through a DMV check, fingerprinting and background check through the Department of Justice and FBI, an orientation, interviews, and references.

Like many agencies in the San Diego area, the program uses RideScheduler, which was created specifically for volunteer driver programs. Volunteers can log in to accept rides, and the software helps with routing, reminders, reimbursement, and ride tracking.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** The 2017 direct program cost was about \$150,000, but administration and indirect costs are shared with other ElderHelp programs. The program has many funding sources: donations, fundraising events, Caltrans funds, grants from corporations and private foundations, and funding for annual projects.

**Benefits of this model:** ElderHelp seeks to support seniors in remaining independent, engaged, and needed members of society. Eighty percent of services are provided by volunteers, who are carefully matched with clients. The program has changed over its lifetime, adopting more policies and structure, while making adjustments to try to provide more rides, such as splitting round-trips into one-way rides using two volunteers. Rides are adjusted to client need, from curb-to-curb to door-through-door. ElderHelp staff and volunteers also keep an eye out for changes in seniors that could mean the need for more support/care, when staff try to help with options and solutions.

**Challenges of this model:** It can sometimes be more difficult to find drivers for evening ride requests, and overall transportation demand is growing, increasing the need for volunteers. Even though many older adults have a hard time making ends meet and need some help, they may be hidden behind closed doors. This lack of visibility and other issues competing for philanthropy can make it more challenging to raise funds. Close, ongoing coordination between local agencies serving this population may help with resource needs while creating a stronger senior safety net in the area.

**Website:** <https://www.elderhelpofsandiego.org/>

## Membership-Based Transportation Services

### ITNMontereyCounty, Monterey, California

Nonprofit affiliate of Independent Transportation Network America (ITNAmerica)

**Sponsoring Agency:** ITNMontereyCounty (ITNMC) was a project of the 2010 Leadership Monterey Peninsula class and began service in 2012. It is the only California Affiliate of ITNAmerica, a national organization whose mission is to “Support sustainable, community-based transportation services for seniors throughout the world by building a senior transportation network through research, policy analysis and education, and by promoting lifelong safety and mobility.” For a fee, ITNAmerica offers Affiliates a business model and support to help meet senior transportation needs.

**How does it work?** ITNMontereyCounty is membership-based. Its service area covers 14 zip codes in the county. Members may book rides for any purpose and at any time for travel alone or with others, with a 20% discount for shared rides. Drivers offer door-to-door, arm-through-arm service, and help with groceries and packages. Drivers do not provide home care services like unpacking groceries or cooking. ITNMC will provide rides 24/7, but the majority take place during normal business hours. Members must call by 2:00 pm to schedule a ride for the following day; same-day requests will be fulfilled only if a driver is available. Members may also schedule recurring rides. ITNMC uses RIDES software to match volunteer drivers and vehicles with riders based on their mobility needs. To sustain operations, ITNMC has also hired part-time drivers to fill in gaps for the 50+ trips taken per day. Drivers have segmented rides, where the driver will wait for up to three stops, or ITNMC offers an hourly option for those who specifically want the driver to stay.

ITNMC includes several ride credit programs:

- CarTrade™, which allows members to donate or trade an unused car and receive the net value from its sale in ride credits. Non-members may also donate a car to provide ride credits to a member
- HealthyMiles and Ride & Shop™ whereby medical offices and retailers receive preferred listings in exchange for helping to discount rides for ITNMC riders who patronize them
- Road Scholarship™ in which volunteer drivers donate ride credits towards scholarships that reduce the ride costs for lower income members. Members who move or pass away may also leave their balances to support other riders.
- Aspire Health Plan will pay for 12 medical rides per year. Aspire chose ITNMC because of the volunteer aspect.

**Who can ride?** Visually impaired adults (over 18) or those age 60 and over, except those needing paratransit service that are wheelchair bound.

**How do riders sign up?** Riders sign up for an annual membership with ITNMontereyCounty and open a prepaid Personal Transportation Account™ based on estimated usage.

**Is there a fee?** Annual membership is \$60 for an individual and \$80 for a family. Rides have a \$4.00 pick-up charge, plus \$1.75/mile with notice by 2:00 pm the day before or \$2.75/mile for same-day service. Trips after 7:00 pm or before 9:00 am have a higher rate because there are fewer volunteers available. Trips average about five miles and \$12.75 in cost to the rider. If the driver must wait more than 20 minutes, e.g., for a doctor's appointment, ITNMC requires an hourly fee of \$20/hour.

Members must keep an ongoing minimum balance of \$50 in their transportation account in cash from prepayment, gift certificates, Ride & Shop™, HealthyMiles, and/or credits received for the member's birthday, from scholarships or making referrals, or earned through CarTrade™ or as a volunteer driver. No money is exchanged with the driver, and drivers do not accept tips. Riders receive a monthly statement showing the rides taken and amounts charged to their transportation account.

### **What's the usage?**

**Current Riders:** 405 & growing weekly

**(Since 2011) Total rides:** 46,146

**Current Volunteer drivers:** About 40

**(Since 2011) Total miles:** 470,589

**How does the program work for the drivers?** Some volunteers drive daily, others a couple of times per week or month, and generally commit to a block of 2-4 hours. Paid drivers are ITNMC staff. Some ITNAffiliates have fleets of donated cars that paid and/or volunteer drivers may drive. ITNMC owns one car used by a paid driver, but otherwise both volunteers and paid drivers use their personal vehicles. Volunteer drivers receive a free annual membership and transportation credits they can bank for their own future use or donate to a friend/family member OR they can receive mileage reimbursement if requested. Volunteer drivers go through driving and background checks, vehicle inspection, training, and ride-along all before giving any rides. ITNMC provides consistent reminders on careful driving, and conducts periodic driver trainings, including paid drivers. ITNMC carries insurance from the Nonprofit Insurance Alliance Group that further protects volunteers plus paid staff and drivers. Although there have been no accidents to date, volunteers must sign a disclosure form waiving ITNMC's liability for personal property in the event of an accident that is the fault of the volunteer.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** The annual budget is about \$500,000. This includes costs for the office and dispatch staff of five; six part-time paid drivers; liability and worker's comp insurance; and ITNAmerica's monthly Affiliate fee for their website/software and support. Revenue comes from memberships, ride fares, local grants, and donations, and pass-through funding from ITNAmerica from their national partner Regeneron for trips to eye appointments.

**Benefits of this model:** Staff see particular pluses in the membership model and charging for rides. They report that members express value in ITNMC and enjoy contributing for their trips. Ride charges are less than a taxi or private rideshare service, and do not reflect the full cost of service (an average 5-mile trip costs the rider \$12.75 but ITNMC over \$34.00 to provide it). Some riders are able to reduce their costs through low-income membership or subsidies. Staff

reported that some ITN Affiliates have not succeeded because they made the service free when they obtained public grants, then were unsuccessful in transitioning back to charging for trips when they no longer had public funds.

Riders report the service is better than Uber, Lyft, or asking a neighbor. ITNMC drivers assist members beyond just the ride, making sure they are okay, dealing with visual impairments, dementia, preventing them from getting lost or confused, checking them in to appointments, and taking stress off them and their families. The cashless system reduces concerns that drivers might be taking advantage and relieves people who do not take care of their own finances.

Riders also say they appreciate not riding in big labeled buses or branded vehicles. Vehicles look just like any other going down the road; similar to Uber and Lyft, ITNMC has simply produced a window sticker with the ITN logo.

**Challenges of this model:** A significant staffing challenge is having to have someone available by phone 24/7. While not a high volume time, dispatch staff are paid a flat rate for covering the phone after-hours for any calls regarding ride needs, cancellations, or changes. Additionally, ITNAmerica is in charge of the software; if their server goes down, they are on East Coast time, and may not be able to address the problem immediately.

**Website:** <https://www.itnmontereycounty.org/>

**Note:** ITNAmerica has been developing ITNCountry (<http://ITNCountry.org>) to offer its tools more broadly to small and rural communities for community-based transportation. Updated tools and software might potentially be easier to use for new programs.

### **Foster City Village Transportation Services, Foster City, California** **Volunteer service of nonprofit Foster City Village**

**Sponsoring Agency:** Foster City Village is based on the “village” model of membership-driven, nonprofit organizations in local communities that help older adults remain independent and age in place, foster active engagement in the community, and reduce seniors’ isolation and loneliness. Foster City Village, begun in 2011 and incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2013, enlists neighbors of all ages to support older adults in the Foster City area. The organization offers a wide range of programs and services to Village members, including transportation, home repair, support for technology, wellness support such as counseling, phone check-ins, and home visits, educational activities, and social events.

**How does it work?** Volunteers provide rides in their personal vehicles for Village members for any purpose: appointments, shopping, errands, Village events, etc. Members may make trips to destinations in Foster City, San Mateo, San Carlos, Belmont, and Redwood City, as well as to Sutter Health’s Mills-Peninsula Medical Center in Burlingame and the Stanford Medical Center

and Veterans Administration in Palo Alto. Members must call to make a ride request at least three working days in advance. Rides are provided Monday through Friday between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm, to avoid peak Bay Area traffic congestion. Some volunteer drivers with a strong relationship with a rider may also provide a ride to church or a special weekend event. If the Village cannot find a volunteer driver or can provide a ride to their destination but not back home, the Village has a partnership with Lyft for the rider to get a Lyft ride at a reduced rate.

**Who can ride?** Residents of zip code 94404 (Foster City and Mariner's Island neighborhood in San Mateo) who have a full Village membership may use the volunteer transportation services. Riders must be able to transfer into a car, and spouses/or companions may ride along.

**How do riders sign up?** By becoming a full Village Member.

**Is there a fee?** The annual Full Village membership is currently \$365 for an individual, \$475 for a couple. An assisted membership at \$120/year is available to individual seniors living in HUD Housing or who have a Housing Choice Voucher. Social only memberships are also available at \$175 for an individual or \$250 for a couple, but do not include transportation.

**What's the usage?**

**Active riders:** 40-60/month

**Rides:** about 250-300 one-way rides/month

**Volunteer drivers:** 42, about 28 of whom are Village members

**How does the program work for drivers?** When Members call to make a ride request, Village staff use their membership software program, Club Express, to post the request on-line. Drivers access the ride requests through their on-line account and choose who they want to drive, when, and if they want to drive one-way or round-trip. Some members have volunteer drivers they prefer, so they alert the volunteer to the trip before they call the office and it is posted in Club Express.

All volunteers initially fill out a form indicating their area(s) of interest: driving, classes, art, special event, calls or visits for very frail elders, etc. Those who volunteer to drive go through a third-party background check, provide their driver's license, proof of insurance, and DMV printout, and sign a form certifying that their car is in good working order.

Although many are, not all volunteer drivers are Full or Social Village members. If a driver is a volunteer member, s/he can attend a Village event, of which there are five official ones each year. Volunteers may also log their miles as a tax-deductible donation.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** The Village currently has a half-time Executive Director who focuses on community outreach and fundraising, and two half-time administrators who take care of service calls, and manage the office, newsletter, emails, etc. The 2019 budget is \$203,000. Memberships cover about 25% of the costs, with the remainder from a combination of corporate, foundation, and individual donations, partnerships, and an annual fundraiser. The Director is seeking grants to help pay for more assisted memberships,

but to encourage engagement, assisted members pay a small amount and volunteer a service or help with events. These members may also bring friends who will end up joining, too.

**Benefits of this model:** Anyone involved in some way with the Village is considered a member – a Board member, staff member, volunteer member, paying member – so that everyone sees themselves as part of the Village regardless of their role. Foster City Village also has partnerships with corporations within the community whose employees will volunteer to pick up or drop off a member during lunch or a break.

**Challenges of this model:** In its seventh year of operations, the Village has a goal of keeping membership dues at the same level. This means ensuring continued and varied sources of funding. The Village is also growing, which could eventually mean the need for increased staff and fundraising.

**Website:** <http://fostercityvillage.clubexpress.com/>

### **Medical Transportation Program, Dane County, Wisconsin**

#### **Program of nonprofit Dane County TimeBank**

**Sponsoring agency:** The Dane County TimeBank is a nonprofit whose members help each other by sharing their abilities, talents, and experiences. When a member provides a service for another member, s/he earns one TimeBank Hour, which can be exchanged for an hour of service from someone else within the network. The TimeBank also sponsors a number of projects, including a medical transportation program.

**How does it work?** The TimeBank offers medical transportation with and outside the city of Madison, Wisconsin, where public options for transportation are limited and rides cover a longer distance. The program has largely focused on those needing rural transportation to recurring medical treatment, such as dialysis at the three main dialysis centers in Dane County. Rides are also provided to medical appointments at various health centers, largely in Madison, if drivers are available.

For dialysis rides, an ongoing volunteer will either drive the client from their home to the dialysis center or pick them up afterward and take them home. If schedules coincide, a driver may drive more than one dialysis patient at a time. Riders with non-dialysis appointments are matched with drivers who cannot necessarily commit to regular weekly rides but can help fill in when needed. Drivers receive bulk emails letting them know when there are new ride requests. These volunteers usually provide a round-trip ride to the medical appointment, sometimes waiting with the client.

**Who can ride?** Dane County residents who are not eligible for other programs, and who are medically stable. The program does not serve those with a power wheelchair or scooter.



**How do riders sign up?** Potential riders call on their own or are referred by clinics or Dane County Human Services. They are screened via a list of questions to ensure they are not eligible for any other program, such as Medicaid Transportation.

**Is there a fee?** No

**What's the usage?** 20-25 rides/week (2018)

**How does the program work for the drivers?** Volunteer drivers must pass a background screening and carry state insurance minimums. Drivers indicate whether they can commit to one or more rides a week or on a less frequent basis and are then matched based on schedule compatibility and geography. Drivers are provided with details on rider needs, such as use of a folding wheelchair or walker, and matched with those they feel they can transport safely and comfortably. For each 100 miles driven, volunteers receive a \$20 gas card plus time bank hours. These can be exchanged for a wide variety of services from other TimeBank members -- anything from art lessons or tutoring to gardening help, home repairs, or clean-up after a flood.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** The TimeBank receives grant funding from Dane County Human Services for medical transportation.

**Benefits of this model:** The Transportation Coordinator looks to the TimeBank for potential drivers to meet medical trip requests. Riders who join the TimeBank may also contact other members directly to arrange transportation for any purpose - medical, pharmacy, shopping, recreation, or other trips. Banked hours offer an additional incentive for volunteer drivers to participate.

**Challenges of this model:** The death of a rider with whom a volunteer driver developed a relationship can make it hard for that driver to want to take on a new rider. Sufficient volunteers is an ongoing issue, especially with turnover in the Transportation Coordination position. The most recent coordinator has been focusing on expanding the driver pool, with support from the TimeBank's Outreach Coordinator.

**Website:** <https://danecountytimebank.org/>



## Programs Leveraging Uber/Lyft Services

The following examples are not volunteer transportation programs but are seeking to fill gaps by leveraging and subsidizing Uber and Lyft rides for various riders in their communities.

### **Common Courtesy, Atlanta, Georgia**

**Nonprofit established to subsidize and facilitate Uber and Lyft rides**

**Sponsoring Agency:** Common Courtesy is a nonprofit organization begun in Atlanta as an intermediary to help seniors use Uber and Lyft ridehailing services. The organization capitalizes on Uber and Lyft for the rides, using staff for ride scheduling and volunteers for administration assistance such as data tracking, office work, and phone calls.

Common Courtesy in Atlanta has expanded to a model through which organizations anywhere can establish a chapter for a community or agency to serve members, clients, or individual riders, and help subsidize rides. Chapters obtain from Common Courtesy tools and training to manage trips and schedule rides, with a special ID for the Chapter and riders to use Common Courtesy's platform.

**How does it work?** Common Courtesy has agreements with both Uber and Lyft for a special dispatch portal. Users call Common Courtesy or their Chapter for a ride using their personal ID. Staff then act as a concierge. They use the dispatch portal to schedule the ride; coordinate the ride by alerting the driver on who they are picking up; and call or text the rider's cell phone with the driver's information when the ride is ready. If riders don't know how long they will be, they can arrange a ride one-way and then call for a return ride, when the process is repeated. Common Courtesy tracks each trip and calls the rider afterward. Staff can also preschedule trips up to 7 days in advance. These rides are put into the queue, and when the ride time arrives, staff monitors it to make sure the ride is accepted by a driver.

This intermediary service was initially designed as a bridge to help older adults use the new ridehailing services but who have no smart phone, have trouble navigating an app, or don't have a credit card or don't want to put one on file with Uber or Lyft. However, Common Courtesy has expanded to include ride subsidization and Chapter elements. This has led to use of the model by many different types of organizations for a broader range of riders. For example, the American Parkinsons' Disease Association formed a chapter to support medical rides for those with Parkinson's disease. Grady Health System has six different departments who are using Common Courtesy for subsidized rides to bring in patients who are missing appointments or as they are discharged to go home.

Chapter interests for scheduling and subsidizing rides have included transportation support for:

- People who are homeless
- Prison reentry by parolees without a driver's license, car, or employment
- Families attending nutrition classes

- Congregation members to religious services
- Youth to internships
- Rides with pets to veterinary clinics
- Group rides for seniors to social events

**Who can ride?** Anyone with a Common Courtesy Personal or Chapter account. Riders must have some form of cell phone so they can receive notifications.

**How do riders sign up?** Riders register with a Common Courtesy Chapter and pay any applicable fees.

**Is there a fee?** Any person, family member, or friend can establish a personal account to pay for an individual's trips through Common Courtesy Atlanta's Family and Friends Chapter. Others can also contribute money to a personal account. Personal accounts require a one-time fee of \$65.00, with a second member (e.g., a spouse) at \$15.00. Riders or their contributors make deposits to the account to make ride payments. This way, riders do not need to keep a credit card on file with Uber and Lyft, and. Unless the ride is subsidized, it is charged to the personal account at the full Uber/Lyft rate for that ride, plus an additional \$1.00 per ride that goes to Common Courtesy. Riders who book their own ride through Common Courtesy's Lyft or Uber app can still have the ride subsidized and paid through their account, with the \$1.00 per ride fee waived.

Chapters no longer have to pay a Chapter fee but do pay \$1.00 per ride to Common Courtesy as the parent organization. Chapters provide the initial funds for a Chapter account. The organization or other donors can then donate money to help subsidize rides for whoever is that Chapter's target population.

There are also two levels of agency membership – Corporate (\$1,800) or Corporate Multi-Site (\$5,500), plus \$1.00 per ride – for organizations wishing to support Common Courtesy's work and who may wish to sponsor rides for designated persons in need. Corporate members receive different levels of publicity and a waiver of registration fees for up to 25 riders.

**What's the usage?** About 150 rides/day and climbing (CC Atlanta Family and Friends Chapter)

**How does the program work for Chapters?** There are nearly 50 Chapters in states including Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, and Virginia. Common Courtesy provides Chapters with what they need to provide the service, including electronic material, training, access to the dispatch portal, and how to adapt the model to their particular community or target ridership.

**What are program costs and funding sources?** Costs include staffing, office, and administration expenses. Common Courtesy receives funds from public agencies, sponsors, the \$1.00/ride charge on each trip, speaking fees, and other donations.

**Benefits of this model:** Common Courtesy enables registered riders, who otherwise would not have the option, to use Lyft and Uber services for a clean, efficient ride, often at a subsidized rate. Riders express great satisfaction with the experience. Riders regularly report enjoying the conversations and interactions with varied drivers. In some cases drivers voluntarily go beyond the ride, taking it on themselves to help passengers to/from their door or with groceries. Chapters also extend the model to many different locations and people, filling local pockets of transportation need. The system also supports more paying trips for drivers of Lyft and Uber, helping them make a living.

**Challenges of this model:** Some areas are still less familiar and comfortable with Lyft and Uber for rides for different populations. Chapter start-ups looking to adapt the program to their chosen service area and target population will have to find sufficient support, funding, and sponsors to enable the level of ride subsidies and staffing necessary to make the program work successfully.

**Website:** <https://www.commoncourtesyrides.org/>

**Another example:** Besides TREP (see p. 23), Omnitrans offers a subsidized Lyft Rides program for people with a disability or aged 62+, regardless of income. After registration, an eligible rider may purchase a promotional code each month with a value toward Lyft-provided trips of \$50, \$80, or \$100 (the most popular). Based on the popularity of the \$100 promotional code, the Lyft Rides program will begin offering \$150 promotional codes in April 2019.

The rider pays Omnitrans for half of the promotional code's value via a credit card on file. The rider then books rides on Lyft using that promotional code, which is good for up to three months. Riders must book their own trips through the Lyft smart phone app. When the rider's code is used up or expires, Lyft bills Omnitrans for the cost of the rides taken, up to the maximum code value.

So, for example, a rider on January 1 pays \$50 to Omnitrans to get a \$100 code. The rider books several trips on Lyft and reaches \$100 in ride costs before the code's March 31 expiration date. Lyft invoices Omnitrans for \$100. Omnitrans pays Lyft the \$100, which is offset by the rider's original \$50 payment and Omnitrans' own grant and local funds.

Omnitrans also offers a taxi voucher program so there is a wheelchair accessible option for eligible riders. Like with Lyft Rides, the rider pays half the cost up front, in this case to receive paper vouchers which come in \$5.00 denominations. If a rider's fare comes to an uneven amount, e.g., \$13.00, riders may either pay the difference in cash (two vouchers worth \$10, plus \$3.00 in cash) or use an extra voucher to total \$15.00. Omnitrans pays the taxi company for all \$5.00 vouchers used by the rider, with the total covered by the rider's 50% payment and other Omnitrans grants and local funds.

**Website:** <http://www.omnitrans.org/getting-around/transit-services/special-transportation-services/>

## Chapter 3: Planning a Volunteer Transportation Program

The following are a series of topical questions that can help guide those considering a volunteer transportation program for their organization, agency, or community. This list can be used as a reference or planning worksheet for thoughts and notes as you start to consider and refine an approach to services, volunteers, ride scheduling, governance, and risk management.

### A. General Service

#### Who do you want to target for rides?

- ☐ Older adults
- ☐ People with disabilities
- ☐ Specific groups, e.g. Veterans
- ☐ Other (job seekers, interns, low-income families, parolees, homeless, etc.)?

#### Who do you expect to drive?

- ☐ Volunteer drivers only
- ☐ Volunteer and paid drivers

#### What location or geographic area(s) do you want to serve?

- ☐ Selected neighborhood(s)
- ☐ Specific zip code(s)
- ☐ Town or city boundary
- ☐ County boundary
- ☐ Multiple towns or cities
- ☐ Other specified boundary or geography

#### Would you expect to limit trip purposes? If yes, to which purposes:

- ☐ Medical (defined as: doctor, specialist, dialysis or other treatment, mental health, acupuncture, physical or other therapy, pharmacy, dentist appointment?)
- ☐ Congregate meal site(s)
- ☐ Grocery shopping
- ☐ Other:

### B. Service Parameters

#### What eligibility criteria for riders would you use?

- ☐ Minimum age:
- ☐ Proof of disability:
- ☐ Proof of residence:
- ☐ Organization member:
- ☐ Recipient of certain public programs:
- ☐ Other:

**What vehicles would be used to provide the service?**

- ☐ Volunteers' personal vehicles
- ☐ Program vehicles
- If program vehicles, who might own or lease the vehicles?

**What level of driver support would you expect to provide?**

- ☐ Curb-to-Curb
- ☐ Door-to-Door
- ☐ Door-through-Door
- ☐ Fully Escorted
- ☐ Mix, based on individual rider need

**What days would you offer service?**

- ☐ Weekdays (5 days or fewer?)
- ☐ Saturdays
- ☐ Sundays
- ☐ When rider and driver agree on trip (as in reimbursed program)

**During what hours would you offer service?**

- ☐ Weekdays:
- ☐ Weekday evenings:
- ☐ Weekends:
- ☐ 24/7

**What limitations would you place on trips?**

- ☐ Maximum number of trips per day/month:
- ☐ Maximum number of miles per month:
- ☐ Maximum subsidy or reimbursement amount per month:
- ☐ No limits

**What level of commitment would you expect from volunteer drivers?**

- ☐ Number of hours per week or month:
- ☐ Pick trips as meets their schedule
- ☐ As arranged with rider (as in reimbursement program)

**C. Ride Scheduling**

**How would you expect riders to request rides?**

- ☐ Direct call
- ☐ One-stop or call center
- ☐ Online
- ☐ App
- ☐ Self-scheduled (as in reimbursement program)
- ☐ Other

**How would you plan to do ride matching/scheduling/tracking of rides?**

- ☐ Scheduling & Data Software:
- ☐ Spreadsheet
- ☐ Manually
- ☐ Other

**How would you expect to schedule rides with drivers?**

- ☐ Assign rides or route for driver during regularly scheduled volunteer shift
- ☐ Online portal for drivers to pick the rides they want
- ☐ Emails to check driver availability
- ☐ Phone calls to check availability
- ☐ Self-scheduled by rider (in reimbursement program)

**D. Governance and Funding**

**What model(s) do you want to consider for your service?**

- ☐ Reimbursed driver program
- ☐ Program of public agency (transit agency, city, county)
- ☐ Program/project of existing nonprofit transportation, senior, social/human services, volunteer organization
- ☐ Program of care coordination agency
- ☐ Affiliate or Chapter of existing organization
- ☐ Village model
- ☐ Timebank model
- ☐ New nonprofit

**Who might be the specific program/project lead or sponsoring organization?** Transit agency, CTSA, City or County, existing nonprofit, community-led organization or volunteer?

**How would you expect to staff the program?**

- ☐ Existing paid staff
- ☐ New paid staff
- ☐ Volunteer staff
- ☐ Mix of paid and volunteer staff
- ☐ Other

**How would you expect to fund the program?**

- ☐ Local funds – which?
- ☐ Government Grants – which?
- ☐ Passenger donations
- ☐ Family contributions
- ☐ Corporate/business contributions
- ☐ Foundation contributions
- ☐ Other



**How would you budget for the program/project?**

- ☐ Staff decision
- ☐ Staff with Board Involvement
- ☐ Staff, Board, and others
- ☐ Other

**E. Coordination**

**Who will you want or need to coordinate with to make the program successful?**

- ☐ Transportation Agencies
- ☐ Health/social service/human Service Agencies
- ☐ Senior organizations
- ☐ Disability organizations
- ☐ Community-based nonprofits
- ☐ Faith community
- ☐ Others

**F. Volunteer Recruitment and Retention**

**How will you recruit volunteers?**

- ☐ Senior organizations
- ☐ Volunteer matching organization(s) (e.g., RSVP, Volunteer Match, Hands On Sacramento)
- ☐ Community-based nonprofits
- ☐ Health/social service/human service agencies
- ☐ Service organizations (e.g., Rotary, Lions, Junior League)
- ☐ Affinity groups
- ☐ Tabling, events
- ☐ Fliers
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Radio or TV interviews
- ☐ Public service announcements

**What will you do to retain volunteers?**

- ☐ Mileage reimbursement
- ☐ Recognition awards and/or events
- ☐ Time credits
- ☐ Obtaining discounts or free offers from services, stores, vendors for them
- ☐ Listing or profiling volunteers in newsletter
- ☐ Volunteer stories on website or social media
- ☐ Other:

## **G. Risk Management**

### **How will you manage risk?**

- ☐ Supplementary insurance
- ☐ Driver vetting
- ☐ Driver training
- ☐ Driver contract
- ☐ Rider contract

### **How will you screen potential volunteer drivers?**

- ☐ Application
- ☐ Interview
- ☐ Current driver's license
- ☐ Proof of insurance
- ☐ Motor vehicle record
- ☐ Criminal background check
- ☐ Reference check
- ☐ Vehicle inspection

### **How do you expect to train drivers?**

- ☐ In-house orientation/training
- ☐ On-line Volunteer Driver Safety Course (*see p. 44*)
- ☐ Training on assisting frail/disabled riders
- ☐ Training on agency vehicle operation
- ☐ Driver training by transit agency or other agency
- ☐ Wheelchair securement for WC-equipped vehicles
- ☐ Car Fit Course
- ☐ Mature Driver Course
- ☐ CPR/first aid training

## **H. Record-Keeping**

### **What records will you maintain?**

- ☐ Accounting records
- ☐ Rider and volunteer records
- ☐ Funder-required records
- ☐ Trip and mileage records
- ☐ Volunteer hours

**Note:** Section 10 of *Volunteer Driver's Guide: A Guide to Best Practices* (*see p. 43 for link*) includes a list of suggested program records. Section 12 of the guide also includes a variety of model forms and procedures.

## Chapter 4 – Selected Resources

The following are links to more resources for those interested in developing a volunteer transportation program.

### **Volunteer Transportation**

#### **National Volunteer Transportation Center (NVTC)**

National organization offering a breadth of resources on volunteer transportation programs, including reports, fact and tip sheets, exercises, risk management guidance, insurance and software resources, online driver safety course (see below), and more.

<https://ctaa.org/national-volunteer-transportation-center/>

#### **5 Keys to Successful Volunteer Driver Programs**

2018 Blog article from National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC)

<https://www.nadtc.org/news/blog/5-keys-to-successful-volunteer-driver-programs/>

#### **Volunteer Transportation: Keys of a Successful Program Toolkit**

Toolkit adapted from NADTC's fall 2018 online course on volunteer transportation programs, including video and Power Point links to four presentations from successful programs; video and Power Point links and a transcript of a webinar on risk, liability, and insurance; and links to a variety of online resources and supplemental reading.

[https://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/Volunteer-Transp-Toolkit\\_Final.pdf](https://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/Volunteer-Transp-Toolkit_Final.pdf)

#### **PROGRAMS THAT MATCH SENIORS WITH VOLUNTEER DRIVERS**

##### **Practical Recommendations for Organizations and Policy Makers**

2008 Report by the National Center for Transit Research at the Center for Urban Transportation Research, University of South Florida

<http://www.nctr.usf.edu/pdf/77717.pdf>

#### **Volunteer Drivers' Guide: A Guide to Best Practices**

177-page guide updated in 2013 by Community Transportation Association of the Northwest (CTANW) under contract from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Geared to Washington state law, but provides recommendations, best practice guidance, model forms, and resources.

[http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/manuals/fulltext/M3046/WashStateVolunteer\\_Drivers\\_Manua\\_2013.pdf](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/manuals/fulltext/M3046/WashStateVolunteer_Drivers_Manua_2013.pdf)

#### **Passenger Stories of Gratitude: Stories about Volunteer Driver Programs and Their Drivers**

2018 collection of riders' stories of their experiences, published by National Volunteer Transportation Center in partnership with Toyota.

[https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Passenger\\_Stories\\_of\\_Gratitude\\_Updated\\_5-22-18.pdf](https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Passenger_Stories_of_Gratitude_Updated_5-22-18.pdf)

## **Volunteer Recruitment**

### **VOLUNTEER DRIVER RECRUITMENT and RETENTION EXPERIENCE and PRACTICE**

Volunteer recruitment and retention guide developed by the National Volunteer Transportation Center (NVTC) and Toyota.

[https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NVTC\\_DriverRecruitHandbook\\_v1.pdf](https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NVTC_DriverRecruitHandbook_v1.pdf)

### **Plan a Strategy: Volunteer Recruitment and Retention**

4-page exercise and worksheet excerpted from complete NVTC/Toyota Guide above.

<https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Exercise-Plan-a-Volunteer-Recruitment-and-Retention-StrategyLKD.pdf>

## **Risk Management**

### **In volunteer driver programs, safety is no accident**

Guide by Volunteers Insurance Service Association, Inc. and Community Transportation Association of America on potential program risks and ways to address them.

[https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Managing\\_volunteer\\_risks.pdf](https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Managing_volunteer_risks.pdf)

### **Volunteer Driver Safety Course**

45-minute online driver safety course created by NVTC and Volunteers Insurance

[https://elearning.ctaa.org/products/volunteer-driver-safety-course-created-as-a-project-of-the-national-volunteer-transportation-center#tab-product\\_tab\\_overview](https://elearning.ctaa.org/products/volunteer-driver-safety-course-created-as-a-project-of-the-national-volunteer-transportation-center#tab-product_tab_overview)

### **VIS Insurance Service Preventer Papers**

Papers from CIMA Volunteers Insurance Service — VIS<sup>®</sup> on driver safety-related topics.

<https://ctaa.org/nvtc-resources/>

## **Reimbursement Program Toolkit and Guidance**

### **TRIP for America**

Provides resources for developing a volunteer driver reimbursement program based on one of the earliest models, TRIP (Transportation Reimbursement Incentive Program), developed by Living Partners in Riverside County. Includes link to download a manual “How To Start a TRIP Service in Your Community.”

<https://ilpconnect.org/trip-for-america/>

## Chapter/Affiliate Programs

### ITNCountry

Program of ITNAmerica, national non-profit transportation network providing tools and resources for those interested in adopting the ITN model for transportation.

<http://itncountry.org/>

### Village to Village Network

National network providing guidance, resources, and support to help communities establish and maintain a Village.

<https://www.vtvnetwork.org/>

### TimeBanks USA

National nonprofit offering resources to support and advance timebanks.

<https://timebanks.org/>

### Common Courtesy

National nonprofit offering tools and training for creating local Chapters to subsidize and facilitate Uber and Lyft rides for designated riders.

<https://www.commoncourtesyrides.org/>



## Afterword: Two More Stories of Volunteer Transportation

**Dorothy Kumaski, age 73, ACC Rides user in Sacramento:** My life changed dramatically on January 25, 2011, when I was suddenly diagnosed as being legally blind. Unable to drive, I was left confused and frightened trying to make sense of how I would take care of my personal and medical needs. After much searching with doctors and other healthcare professionals, I turned to the ACC Senior Services, where I learned about their volunteer rides program (VRP). This offered me my first glimmer of hope! During this initial time of vulnerability, the personal care and concern of the drivers in providing me with safe and secure transportation allowed me to begin to rebuild my life. Initially, looking forward to a life of depression, isolation and dependency on family and society, their drivers opened the door for me to a brighter and more independent future. VRP allows me to plan and perform my daily activities, such as weekly medical treatments, doctor's appointments, medical tests, pharmacy runs, grocery shopping, banking, etc. Perhaps the most fulfilling benefit of the VRP is how it allows me to maintain my social contacts with family and friends and to participate in community activities, such as classes at the Society for the Blind. There I am able to gain personal satisfaction and contribute back to society by volunteering as a mentor for the newly blind and visually impaired seniors. So you can see why the VRP at ACC is essential in allowing me to continue to be a fully functioning and contributing member of society.<sup>6</sup>

**Cheryl McGrath, driver:** My happiest experience as a volunteer driver is one when I start the drive with a feeling of excitement... at meeting a new person, at the possibility of "clicking" with someone who has wisdom that comes only from living many years, and finding a new friend – even if for only an hour or so.

Each and every time I take a drive with a client, I meet someone who has something to say. On a good day, I find myself driving home with something to think about – it may be a sad thing about the pains and troubles that inevitably accompany the aging process. Or, on one of my truly lucky days, I will be inspired to think about life, especially a life well-lived – in good faith with the excitement and hope that each new day brings. I've found over the years, that most days when I drive, are very good days.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Passenger Stories of Gratitude: Stories about Volunteer Driver Programs and Their Drivers*, used with permission from the National Volunteer Transportation Center.

<sup>7</sup> *Stories from the Road, Stories from the Heart*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, National Volunteer Transportation Center, 2014 Both used with permission from the National Volunteer Transportation Center.