



*The Transportation Option
that Will Work for Everyone*



How to Start a TRIP Service in Your Community

Manual

Complete step-by-step process to organize
and start a TRIP service in your community right away.

*The Beverly Foundation has rated TRIP as
.....“the nation’s best volunteer driver model”*

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in what The Beverly Foundation said in 2009 is “the nation’s best volunteer driver model”. The Independent Living Partnership has operated TRIP for all of the 7200 square mile area of Riverside County California since 1993. The people service by TRIP live in a variety of geographical settings, from very rural to dense cities and everywhere in between.

TRIP is a “rider centered” model that empowers those it serves. From an organizational perspective, TRIP delivers the most transportation assistance at the lowest organizational expense. TRIP differs dramatically from the old “volunteer driver centered” model by shifting responsibility for volunteer recruitment and ride scheduling from the organization to the rider. This innovation frees the sponsoring organization from the need for endless recruitment and results in huge cost savings over the old style volunteer centered models.

TRIP allows service programs to be scaled up or down as required by available resources. It empowers riders; helps build and strengthen social networks, and helps people to continue to live independently in their own homes. It is attractive to funders and endearing to those it serves. Time and again program users tell us that TRIP has freed them from isolation, given them the ability to continue to live independently in their own homes, improved their health, given them hope and made them happy.



The innovative TRIP model has a record of proven effectiveness over two decades, many millions of miles, and millions of volunteer assisted trips. It supports rider volunteer recruitment to select and recruit their choice of drivers, resulting in low cost and low program risk. In a recent conversation with the

Director of Loss Control for a national insurance group to us that "when a relationship is between the driver and the rider, with no organizational involvement, there is definitely no non-owned auto exposure!" Because riders and volunteers arrange their own rides, recruitment and scheduling costs are non-existent. It is an extremely efficient method of focusing volunteer effort on an effective transportation solution that will work almost anywhere.

The Board of Directors of our organization has made it a priority that the TRIP program takes an active role in sharing what we have learned over the years to help others around the country provide similar services in their communities. We are glad to do that.

Our surveys of TRIP riders have shown that the TRIP model provides the transportation that people have been lacking and needing, and at a fraction of the cost of special needs alternatives. TRIP gives them what is needed to be alive again, to get their own groceries, go to worship, make new friends, heal, to be independent and self-sufficient – a friend and companion with wheels! Following are some of the findings that will interest you:

- Overwhelmingly (96.6%) surveyed TRIP service riders have told us that “since having TRIP” they are now “able to travel as much as needed. This is the reverse of their assessment of their ability to travel to meet their needs before having TRIP.
- Even though TRIP for Riverside County allows most riders to travel for any purpose, the top three purposes of travel cited by respondents, in descending order, were for medical purposes, grocery shopping, shopping for other things. Some told us they used the service for entertainment purposes and those riders who used the service for religious purposes were able to attend weekly services.
- Having TRIP has resulted in positive outcomes for all riders. Following, In descending order of the mention, are the benefits that riders identified as a result of their TRIP supported transportation capabilities:
 - Able to get to my doctors when I need to (94.8%)
 - Easier for me to go shopping (84.5%)
 - Now feel happier most days. (81.0%)
 - Able to get out and do more things (74.1%)
 - Feel that physical health has improved (64.4%)
 - I am able to be more active (46.6%)
 - Feel like I have gotten back some of my independence (41.4%)
 - My outlook on life has improved (25.9%)
 - I feel less alone (20.7%)
 - I am more connected to my community (19.0%)
 - I have made new friends (13.8%)

While conducting the surveys, we also asked riders to tell us how TRIP has helped them. Following are five brief anecdotes that demonstrate the power of the TRIP model:

1. She is in her 80's and when she lost her husband she felt very lonely. He used to drive for her everywhere. Since having TRIP she is able to ask people to drive for her without feeling embarrassed because she is able to reimburse them. She volunteers at the senior center, goes to play bingo, and exercises quite frequently. She doesn't know what she would do without TRIP.
2. Another rider in her mid-30s told us that her kidneys were failing and her doctors told her that she had three years to live at the most. She was placed on the kidney transplant list at a local hospital, but was not hopeful that she would receive a kidney donation in time. She applied for TRIP and was determined to be eligible for non-local travel for medical purposes. With transportation assistance supported by TRIP, she was able to travel to a large distant medical center that specialized in kidney transplants, received her new kidney and now credits TRIP with saving her life.
3. Another rider told us that she was alone, homebound and unable to travel. She regularly missed her doctor's appointments and needed medical treatment. After she was approved for TRIP, the program assisted to get a volunteer driver and then she was able to travel to meet her pressing medical needs. She told us that she didn't know the driver well, but now they have

become “like family” – they are very close friends and she says it is comforting to know that she is not alone in the world anymore and can rely on her new friend.

4. Another interesting story is told by a woman who used her TRIP status to recruit several volunteers who are now her friends. They have formed a social group around the TRIP rider and have group outings and do things together.
5. Then there is the man who was alone and unable to get to dialysis treatments. TRIP helped him get a volunteer driver and he is now on a three time a week schedule that is keeping him alive.

This manual will help guide you through the process of starting and operating a TRIP volunteer driver service in your community. Success in any endeavor flows from the application of solid management principles - planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. This manual will make it easy to plan this process in a step-by-step and time saving way.

TRIP is easily implemented and administered through a low-cost, subscription, cloud based service. Training and technical assistance are available for start-ups and on-going TRIP model services. More information about supportive services is available at www.ILPconnect.org.

So, let's get started! You have probably already made many of the decisions that you will need to finalize during this process. Others you may want to consider more as you assess your available resources and how different choices of service and operation will increase or decrease the expense of your program and impact the capacity of your service to provide needed transportation.

The critical first priority of starting and operating a TRIP service is that you secure operations funding that will extend beyond a start-up grant. Federal grant funding has been a source of one or two year funding for many start-ups, but we caution that the future of this type of funding is unpredictable at best and warn you that the development of long-term supportive funding needs to be an essential and priority activity of the organization providing the service. Hopefully future funding policies will focus on transportation equity for people of all mobility capabilities, but for now your board, steering committee, organization management and staff will need to do the hard work. We suggest that the commitment of ongoing funding for the service you would like to operate should be “priority one”.

STEP 1 – WHO WILL BE SERVED

A TRIP service is extremely versatile and can be used to provide transportation assistance for just about anyone. A first step in starting a service program is to precisely identify those who will receive the services.

Typically, the primary intent of starting and operating any service is to provide transportation for underserved and unserved people living in our communities. Who might be included in this category?

1. people who live in an area without public or other transportation services or where minimal services are provided
2. people who may be elderly and live alone
3. people who have disabilities and/or suffer from chronic or serious illnesses or mental impairments that limit their mobility
4. people who are living on very low income that may be near or below the poverty level
5. and those who have become isolated by choice, circumstances, or who have been abandoned by family and friends.

Instead of defining characteristics of members of the general public, another possible focus of service might be for members of a health management organization, a public service organization, a transportation agency, or a special membership organization of some type. In each case, you will likely want to further define the eligibility requirements of those who you will want to serve. In many cases, this could be pretty much the same as for those members of the general public, previously described.

Presumably the impetus for you to start a supplemental transportation service grew from the recognition that a particular underserved or unserved group of residents required assistance. The size of each particular group identified for service will impact service expenses. The larger the group and the more groups that are included will increase service expense. Sources of funds may specify who can be served.

Following is a list of possible groups requiring service:

- Older adults, aged _____ and above
- Adults with disabilities over the age of _____
- Other people with disabilities: _____
- People who live where public services do not exist _____
- People for whom public services are not available on certain days or times of day:

- General public
- Other: _____

STEP 2 – TRIP’S BASIC ELEMENTS

A standard TRIP service is simple to operate, once service and operational decisions are made and those parameters and variables are entered in the TripTrak™ cloud software that was designed specifically to administer and meet reporting requirements.

The success that existing TRIP services have enjoyed over the years is the result of the innovative design of the TRIP model, some basic operational procedures that are required to achieve success, and on-going management through the application of solid business practices.

Key features of a successful TRIP model service program include:

1. **Volunteer drivers** - *Volunteer drivers, who are recruited by riders from friends and neighbors, and the shared responsibility of riders and their volunteers to schedule rides as needed, are central to the success of the TRIP model. The use of self-recruited volunteer drivers eliminates recruitment, screening, training, matching and ride scheduling expenses.*

Previously, the typical approach to the provision of special or alternative transportation has been to buy a van or a fleet of other vehicles to be operated by paid or volunteer drivers. This approach requires significant capital investment and on-going expense. It also limits service flexibility and limits the number of people who can be served and the amount of service that can be provided.

Recognizing the inherent limitations of owning vehicles, processing requests for service and scheduling rides, a logical next thought is to use paid or volunteer drivers to operate their own vehicles to provide needed rides. The extent to which volunteer drivers are paid or recruited and managed impacts other practical concerns about risk and exposure to liability losses.

TRIP is the answer. The rider centered TRIP model begins by giving riders the opportunity and responsibility of selecting and recruiting one or more volunteers from among friends and neighbors or friends of friends or friends of family or friends of neighbors, and so forth. This “rider centered” approach, unlike the old style “volunteer centered” model, emphasizes friendship building and deeper relationships that are socially empowering for the rider.

It is pretty typical that someone may think that seniors especially are not capable of taking care of themselves. We often hear this sentiment expressed in public meetings and around planning tables. HOWEVER, as difficult as this concept might be at first, TRIP has proven that when people are given responsibility and the necessary tools to assume personal responsibility, individual recruitment of volunteers from among their friends and neighbors and the scheduling and management of personal transportation needs, it is very much possible.

As we often say, in TRIP every rider has one or more volunteers that they have contacted

and recruited. TRIP for Riverside County California will end this year again with more than one thousand rider recruited volunteer drivers providing rides to doctors, to stores, for worship and for other purposes. Imagine how monumental a task it would be for organizational recruiters to sign-up a thousand volunteer drivers! Though TRIP programs around the country vary in size, all share the common profile of friends and neighbors providing escorted transportation when and where it is needed. The way that a TRIP model service is successful is through the organization's belief and conviction that mobility poor residents in a community can be self-reliant.

Also, there is a significant difference in relationships that result from the TRIP model of rider recruitment and the shared autonomy of rider-driver cooperation in ride scheduling and delivery. Friendship building occurs and extends beyond the shared transportation experience, often resulting in strengthening and rebuilding the rider's social network.

The recruitment of a volunteer may seem daunting. It is common that the first thing an applicant for service will say, when asked who they know who might be a volunteer driver for them, is "I don't know anyone". We have discovered over the years that what the statement really means is "I don't want to be bothered to take responsibility on myself and I want you (Mr. Program) to do it for me." Another common thought that riders have is that asking someone they know to be their volunteer driver will be burdensome. They sometimes feel that asking someone they know to help will diminish their self-image of being "independent".

TRIP educates applicants to understand that being "independent" doesn't mean being alone and unable to get to doctors or just to get out of their homes and go somewhere. TRIP techniques and materials have been developed that make driver recruitment pretty much possible for everyone. In surveys riders tell us that the payment of mileage reimbursement for volunteer drivers makes the request for a ride from a friend or neighbor much easier. The ability to offer "to help pay for the gas" turns the request for a ride into more of a business transaction than a request for charity.

We have not found that establishing a fallback volunteer pool to be cost effective. For several years we tried it the "hybrid" way, with volunteers recruited by riders and a pool of volunteers recruited by the agency for those few individuals who had great personal difficulty self recruiting a volunteer.

Let's say that 5 people cannot get their own volunteer and it costs \$5,000 for the staff time to recruit, and for the screening, matching and scheduling to get rides for those 5 people. What if spending that \$5,000 means that 25 more people go unserved? Is that a reasonable trade-off? Also, the thought that a pool of volunteers is needed, "should the senior not be able to find a driver" presupposes failure, guarantees lack of commitment from the agency, and weakens support for facilitating rider recruitment success.

Ultimately we eliminated the considerable costs associated with recruitment, screening, and scheduling volunteer drivers, and committed to giving those responsibilities to riders with the support needed for their success. That enabled us to available dollars into more mileage reimbursements and more trips for more people.

When communities and organizations start new services, there is always tension between building a brick infrastructure or maximizing services. *The emphasis is better placed on supporting self-reliance, personal independence and more rides.*

2. **Riders** - *Beside retargeting of resources, there are other reasons that the TRIP model requires and assists riders to recruit their own drivers:*
 - No one is in a better position to know the character of a volunteer. Riders know their friends or neighbors and ask those they trust to volunteer.
 - It is empowering for a rider to refocus on helping themselves. Instead of becoming accustomed to giving up personal responsibility and being helped like a small child, requiring and helping riders recruit their own volunteer driver helps to encourage an attitude and behavior directed toward self-sufficiency.
 - When riders reach out to those around them and form closer bonds with them, their support network expands.
 - Programs that recruit volunteers for their riders agree that recruitment is one of the most difficult aspects of providing volunteer transportation. If riders recruit their own volunteers it is like having a hundred volunteer recruiters out in the field instead of one person with a desk at your agency.
 - Because your service program is not recruiting, screening, training and matching volunteers with riders, the risk and liability potential associated with those activities is substantially limited. *(For more on this topic, please refer to the “Risk and Liability” discussion in the FAQ section at <http://ilpconnect.org/risk-and-liability/>. Also the report of a study of “Risk, Liability, and Loss Experience of Volunteer Driver Services“ is available on our website at: http://ilpconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Risk-Liability-Loss-Experience-in-Volunteer-Driver-Services_REPORT.pdf)*
 - Rider recruitment of volunteer drivers substantially reduces the expense of operating the program and expands service capacity.
 - Riders are encouraged to recruit and use multiple drivers, which expands service availability, flexibility and reliability for riders and also reduces volunteer driver burn out.
3. **Fees** – *The TRIP model provides rides free of charge to riders. TRIP is a “volunteer friends” model. Friends help friends because of their friendship. Where a fee is charged for service, whether or not the fee is paid to the volunteer, the relationship changes from a friend helping a friend to a livery service, not unlike a taxi service.*

When a rider is required to pay for a ride and a their volunteer receives a payment for the ride, issues with insurance and tax reporting of “volunteer” income arise. Risk and liability are shifted completely to the sponsoring organization. The TRIP model avoids these adverse consequences by not charging the rider for rides.

Also, as attractive as some might think that charging fees might be for service sustainability, the fact is that imposing small fees on a small number of people does not result in any significant off-set of program expenses. Sometimes planners reason that it is appropriate to charge a large fee because of the high level of service that is provided or this distance involved in the trips that are provided.

- If the amount of fee that is charged is large, the imposition of the fee will exclude low income residents from receiving needed service
- When a rider pays a fee for transport in a vehicle, depending on a variety of circumstances, courts have found the transportation provided to be a “livery conveyance” with all of the associated “car for hire” insurance and legal obligations, whether or not the vehicle is privately owned or owned by a business. (If anyone is considering charging fees, we suggest they contact legal, insurance and tax professionals.)

There are many ways, other than requiring payment from riders, to underwrite TRIP program operations and the payment of mileage reimbursements. Donations may be requested from riders (typically the riders in the TRIP program in Riverside County have very low income and are unable to make donations), families of rider, volunteers and the general public. Support by area businesses and institutions can be solicited. Fund raising events can be staged to support the service. Grants from foundations and grants or fee-for-service contracts with government or public agencies can be arranged.

4. **Rides** - *Rides are arranged between riders and their drivers. This TRIP model feature provides the means for wide geographical service in far flung rural areas. It also provides the maximum convenience for riders and their volunteers in any locale. Rides can be prearranged or spur of the moment, on any day, at any time, as mutually agreeable to the volunteer and the rider.*

The TRIP model has been designed to maximize empowerment for those it serves. It tells people they are capable to do for themselves and it asks them to take back some responsibility for what happens in their life. The TRIP model provides rides for enrolled riders and also helps them learn to do more to take care of themselves. Implementing the TRIP model helps people reach out to friends and neighbors, create new relationships, and rebuild and strengthen their social network.

Instead of getting between riders and volunteers, the TRIP model asks riders to have their own conversations with their volunteers. The conversation is often more than “I need a ride” – more usually, the conversations are those that normally happen between friends. “How have you been feeling? I’ve been OK, but need to go to the pharmacy pretty soon –

do you think we could go next week sometime? Maybe we can stop for lunch too? Oh, that would be wonderful.” The idea of advance scheduling takes on an entirely different connotation.

Besides being beneficial to your riders, providing them with the ability and responsibility to arrange for their own rides eliminates the needs for scheduling software and the staffing expense that accompanies dispatch activities.

5. **Vehicles** - *Private automobiles, owned by volunteer drivers, are used to provide the transportation.*

The TRIP model focus is on rider preferences. Private vehicles are preferred for transportation by most older adults. Throughout their lives they may have relied exclusively on the automobile to get where they needed to go. For those who have not used public transportation during the active period of their lives, it is difficult to transition to public options. Changes in health status and financial circumstances often complicate the feasibility of using public options.

6. **Mileage Reimbursements are Paid for Volunteer Drivers** – *Mileage reimbursements are paid to riders, who are then required to divide up each month’s payment among their volunteer drivers.*

The promised payment of mileage reimbursements to offset vehicle expenses that might be incurred by the volunteer driver makes it more comfortable for a rider to recruit drivers. The ability to offer to contribute to the payment of gas expense makes it easier to initially ask a friend or neighbor to volunteer to assist with their transportation needs.

It is true that most of us have very big and generous hearts. It is more than likely that we would agree to help a neighbor or a friend if they asked us for a ride to their doctor or the store. At least we would if the requests were occasional. The payment of mileage reimbursement functions to help cement the assistance relationship of the volunteer to the rider for repeated and continual assistance. As the relationship continues, because the rider is helping to pay for the expense of travel, the rider comes to feel that on-going transportation transactions are more of an equitable exchange.

Partly, the volunteer comes to view the mileage reimbursement payment as recognition for the important service they are providing. Also, many volunteer drivers have little if any income over and above Social Security and paying the cost of gas is an important consideration. Mileage reimbursements are not income and are not reportable on a 1099, provided that they are made under an "accountable plan" and the reimbursement is at or below the IRS standard mileage rate.

Any rate, up to the IRS standard rate then in effect, which changes every year, can be used to calculate and pay mileage reimbursements. Based on projections of a

combination of estimated use and available resources for the current year, a rate that meets financial resource availability can be set. You may determine that you want to pay .25 per mile, or .30 per mile, or to change the rate in order to maximize service utilization in any period subject to resource constraints. The TRIP Program in Riverside has been paying at a .32 per mile rate for some time now but, for a period recently, the rate was changed to .25 per mile in order to maintain service to the maximum number of riders possible while not exceeding the funding allocated for the period.

Some TRIP services pay up to the maximum standard mileage reimbursement rate that is permitted by the IRS. The TripTrak™ cloud software provides each service with the capability to establish the rate that is appropriate and necessary for their program operation, or to change that rate whenever necessary. The software also provides the capability to maintain up to ninety-nine separate programs or funding sources and each can have a separate rate of reimbursement if necessary

Paying the IRS standard rate is not necessary for a number of reasons:

1. Many rides take TRIP riders to destinations that the driver would be going to anyway.
2. As a volunteer program, volunteer drivers provide the use of their vehicles as part of their volunteer commitment to their friends.
3. Generally the wear and tear on a volunteer's vehicle is not excessive.
4. In 2006 the U.S. Department of Transportation established the fact that the average gas mileage for a US auto is 22.6 MPG. If the rate you pay is 32 cents per mile, a volunteer traveling 22.6 miles would receive \$7.23 in mileage reimbursement per gallon of gas used. If the price of gas is \$4 per gallon, at 32 cents per gallon the driver is receiving \$3.23 more than the cost of their fuel. Not overpaying reimbursements helps provide more rides.

The advantages of paying mileage reimbursement by check, instead of by other methods, are numerous:

1. To operate an effective program, blank mileage reimbursement forms should be sent to program participants each month. It is cost effective to mail the check with blank forms and enhances mail security to have the checks camouflaged by blank request forms.
2. Receiving a communication at least once a month from TRIP is a tangible reminder to riders of the service they are being provided
3. Sending a check each month with a "Do Not Forward" endorsement is a verification of the residence address of the recipient
4. Mailing the check is an opportunity to also send periodic notices, "tips" and other information to the check recipient, or to conduct surveys
5. Having to deposit or cash the check each month helps cement the relationship between the rider and his/her volunteer (shared task)

6. A direct deposit is not advised. It will go unnoticed into a rider's account subverting the benefits of check mailing. Potentially, also, the account might be overdrawn and the deposit will then be applied to the overdraw fees instead of being given to volunteers.

(Additional discussion of Mileage Reimbursement is included in STEP 5, Managing Capacity, and is posted in the FAQ section at <http://ilpconnect.org/mileage-reimbursement/>)

STEP 3 – WHO CAN BE A VOLUNTEER DRIVER

Riders recruit their own volunteer drivers in the TRIP model service program. However, a decision needs to be made with regard to what relationship the volunteers can have with the rider. Will they be friends and neighbors? Will family members be allowed to be a volunteer driver? Will paid caregivers be allowed to be a rider's volunteer driver and, if so, will there be income considerations?

We expect that all TRIP model service programs will agree that friends and neighbors will be eligible to serve as volunteer drivers. Will family members also be eligible to serve as volunteer drivers? There may be some reasons why family members might be considered for eligibility. It is estimated that families provide informal care for up to 80% of frail adults. Making all families eligible to receive reimbursements for "volunteering" to help their mom or dad could very well break the bank. Some policy makers might regard caring for close relatives as familial responsibility, some funders might balk at providing funds for family members, and we have found that most families agree.

However, it is estimated that about 17% of families provide 40 hours or more a week of caregiving for the elderly. Studies have clearly documented that the financial stress that often results from caregiving on working family members reduces disposable income and can exhaust savings. Often children must leave the workplace to provide full time care for a loved one resulting in household income below the poverty level. In cases like this, where considerable transportation is required to provide needed medical support, TRIP mileage reimbursement might be necessary. Consider the following two possible cases.

- A family member is caring for the rider, does not have a job outside the home, the household income is at poverty level, and the rider requires frequent and long distance travel for medical purposes that could not be achieved without mileage reimbursement support? Will eligibility be restricted to out-of-area medical travel only?
- The rider suffers from dementia, has no remaining friends, remains in his home, but gets lost when he attempts to travel on his own. Neighbors will have nothing to do with him anymore and his only son, who lives in another city 45 miles away, takes off work and is docked pay to come and drive his dad to the medical center for care and to the grocery store for supplies several times a month. Should this family member be eligible to receive mileage reimbursement support?

Family members may be eligible to serve as a volunteer driver in the following circumstances:

We caution about permitting family members to be reimbursed as volunteer drivers across the board because so many families are caregivers for other family members. A blanket authorization of reimbursement eligibility for family members will likely require an extremely large mileage reimbursement budget or, if capped, deny services to others who might need transportation assistance more.

If a caregiver is paid to provide full care for a rider, including transportation assistance, would that person also be eligible to receive mileage reimbursements? Perhaps the caregiver is paid by a social welfare agency for certain caregiving activities that do not include taking the person to the doctor or to the store. Under what circumstances might a caregiver be eligible to receive mileage reimbursements?

Caregivers may be eligible to serve as a volunteer driver in the following circumstances:

What other exceptions can you think of for someone other than a friend or neighbor to serve as a volunteer driver?

STEP 4 – WHAT AREA WILL BE SERVED

Define the area that the program will serve:

We have a specific service area already defined. What are the specific boundaries of the service area? Is it a specific city? Specific zip codes?

Have those outside your agency or organization, who will provide funding, specified the areas to be served?

Has a phase-in plan been developed? First this area, then with more funds that area, and so forth?

Multiple funds will each be allocated to serve a specified area?

○ Funding Source: _____

○ Area to be served: _____

○ Funding Source: _____

○ Area to be served: _____

○ Funding Source: _____

○ Area to be served: _____

○ Funding Source: _____

○ Area to be served: _____

○ Funding Source: _____

○ Area to be served: _____

A TRIP service is capable of serving large geographical areas, multiple cities, counties and regions if you would like it to. Would serving a population in a large and inclusive area result in increased funding opportunities? What might that area be?

STEP 5 – MANAGING CAPACITY

A TRIP service program is extremely adaptable and can be scaled to any resource level. Because volunteer recruitment and ride scheduling are the responsibility of the riders, staffing and office requirements are kept to a minimum. Other controllable service program variables add an incomparable versatility to every service.

In STEP 2, the effect that changing the mileage reimbursement rate has on service cost was explored. *The mileage reimbursement rate is the variable that is the easiest to change, as funding circumstances warrant.*

Travel Purposes

Another variable that can be set for the entire group of riders that are served, or those served under each separate program or funding source, or discretely for each rider based on individual considerations is the purposes of travel that will be allowed. Allowable purposes of travel can range from travel for any subsistence or quality of life purpose to a single purpose only, and anything in between. The more purposes of travel that are allowed, the more independent riders can be and, potentially, the more costly the service program might be. Other variables, however, can be set as service cost controls that limit mileage reimbursement expense, even if all purposes of travel are allowed. For now, think about what purposes of travel might be allowed for your service program in general:

- All purposes allowed
- Travel that needs to cross jurisdictional boundaries
- Travel for medical purposes and for grocery shopping
- Travel for medical purposes only
- Travel for religious purposes only
- Travel for work or volunteer service
- Other: _____

Mileage Reimbursement

(Refer to discussion of the importance of mileage reimbursement payments in STEP 2, TRIP's Basic Elements)

The TRIP model pays mileage reimbursements to offset the vehicle expenses of volunteer drivers. Anecdotally, we know that friends and neighbors will more often than not

agree to help with transportation when asked occasionally to help. Following are reasons why the payment of mileage reimbursements is an important TRUE TRIP model element:

- Because the rider is able to offer the mileage reimbursement in exchange for the ride, there is the perception that the arrangement they make with their volunteer is more of a business exchange than a request for charity.
- Though a friend or neighbor may volunteer one time, or occasionally, the regular payment of the mileage reimbursement encourages regular volunteer assistance.
- If a volunteer insists that they do not want the mileage reimbursement it is often effective to suggest that they accept it and donate it to the charity of their choice or back to the TRIP program (The cash donation to a qualified charity could result in a tax benefit for the rider.)

A "Request for Mileage Reimbursement" form is provided in the TripTrak™ software program. The layout of the form matches the input screen for entering rider trip data in the program. *In order for a mileage reimbursement plan to qualify as an Internal Revenue Service "accountable plan", a reimbursement arrangement must "adequately account for the reimbursable expenses within a reasonable period of time."* Adequacy includes the date of travel, the trip origination and destination, and the mileage. The national transportation data base standard definition of a trip is that, "a one way trip is counted as complete each time a rider leaves a vehicle" at a destination.

The TRIP model has been designed to conform to IRS rules, but also keep the process manageable for riders and volunteers. Because of that, exact addresses are not required (people do not know the address of most destinations). Approximations of mileage to and from destinations are established in the TripTrak™ software to control and monitor mileage reimbursement requests. Travel can be recorded within a city or between cities and the mileage for the entire day recorded fairly simply. But, even though travel may start at point A and end at point B, multiple stops can occur going to the ultimate destination or returning home. Use of the "Request for Mileage Reimbursement" form that we provide adequately details and supports trips to make your reimbursement plan an IRS accountable reimbursement plan and avoid the requirement of providing volunteers with a form 1099.

The mileage reimbursement rate that will be paid is a controllable variable that will impact the total expense of providing the transportation service. An IRS accountable plan is the same for a volunteer program as it is for a business operation. As such, any mileage reimbursement rate can be paid up to the IRS standard rate then in effect. It can also be less. The TRIP model operates on the premise that the main motivation for volunteer service is the desire to "give something back", "do good", and to "help" a friend or neighbor. Focus groups and surveys have documented these as the main reasons why people volunteer to be TRIP drivers. Paying a mileage reimbursement helps both the rider and the volunteer feel worthwhile, but the rate does not have to be the maximum allowed by the IRS. TRIP in Riverside has never paid the full IRS standard mileage reimbursement rate, which has enabled the support of more rider trips.

To determine the initial mileage reimbursement rate that will be paid, use the table below. Several variables will impact the decision about which rate to select: estimated number of riders to be served, the monthly mileage allowance to be established for each rider (consider the average length of trips to be supported – this is a way to cap reimbursement expenses), and the resources constraint. Rates can be increased or decreased (more difficult to lower a rate than to raise the rate) as actual service experiences and economic circumstances require.

Mileage allowance amounts, by one-way trip and per month, can be set for all riders or discretely for each rider based on individual considerations. Travel allowance limits can be used to make mileage reimbursement funds stretch farther if need be. As an example, let us assume the rate chosen was 40 cents a mile.

Per Mile Reimbursement Rate	X	Monthly Mileage Allowance Per Rider	X	Number of Active Riders Per Month	=	Maximum Expected Mileage Reimbursement Expense Per Month	X 12 =	Annualized Mileage Reimbursement Expense Estimate
\$.40		50		25		\$500		\$6,000

Keep in mind that whatever monthly allowance is set will not mean that all riders use the full amount allowed each month. Also, because the TRIP service model is a volunteer friends approach, the travel assistance provided by the volunteer driver is not likely to stop when one-way or per month limits are reached. Even though you will only pay for travel up to the mileage allowance that has been established, the logic is that the travel would not have occurred without TRIP support and, therefore, the full amount of mileage that is reported for each trip should be recorded. When total mileage exceeds the mileage paid, cost per mile will decrease. This will cause “cost per trip” and “subsidy per mile” to decrease. Cost per trip and subsidy per mile are transportation performance measures by which various transportation services can be compared – the lower your service program’s cost per trip and subsidy per mile, the more attractive it will look for continued funding considerations.

RATE: If the rate that was established in STEP 2 is unchanged, or if this exercise caused rethinking the amount of the initial mileage reimbursement rate to be paid, enter the rate that has been decided upon here -

MONTHLY MILEAGE ALLOWANCE:
Enter the initial monthly mileage allowance per rider here –

These can be changed as actual service program performance warrants.

A one-way trip mileage limit can also be established. A one-way trip mileage limit can be used to allow more trips to be completed within the limitation imposed by the monthly mileage limit. For example, if you set the monthly mileage limit at 200 miles per month, setting the one-way trip limit at 20 miles will mean that up to 10 one-way trips or 5 round-trips can be encouraged by the one-way trip limit.

Both the monthly mileage limit and the one-way trip limit decision must be based on the reality of travel requirements of your riders. If the nearest medical care is 50 miles away and the rider needs to go to the doctor 2 times per month, it doesn't make sense to set a monthly mileage limit of 50 when reimbursement for medical travel alone will be 100 miles round trip, two times. But it is not necessary to plan to pay a mileage reimbursement that fully covers all distances either. If the payment of some reasonable amount encourages the volunteer supported trip, the result may well be that mileage beyond the number of miles paid may be provided, which effectively lowers the cost per trip making support of the service still more attractive to funders.

MAXIMUM ONE-WAY MILEAGE ALLOWANCE:

Enter the initial one-way trip mileage allowance per here –

Other Travel Restrictions or Exceptions

You may want to establish travel parameters for each individual rider in your service program, as indicated by their existing needs and capabilities. Maximizing the availability of funds to provide *needed* rides will translate into the ability to serve more riders.

For example, "Robert" has requested TRIP service. Robert has a son who lives just down the block from him. His son helps him with shopping and other things on weekends, but works out of town and is not available to help Robert get to his once a week doctor's appointments. In this case, a specific restriction that reimburses volunteer drivers for assisting Robert for the purpose of medical travel on weekdays, when his son is not available, might be appropriate.

Typical restrictions might also include travel out of area only, if the rider needs transportation across jurisdictional boundaries that no other local service is able to provide. Another restriction might be to support transportation on days when the local transportation service does not operate or after hours.

If a program generally does not authorize family members for mileage reimbursement eligibility, an exception might be considered for a family member to transport the rider to dialysis three times a week that is a distance of 35 miles each way and the family member is out of work and cannot afford to buy gas to make these regular trips possible.

Every individual has specific needs and specific capabilities. Closely matching allowances to needs and capabilities maximizes the effective utilization of resources. Each TRIP program should establish a system that accurately evaluates each riders capabilities and transportation needs and awards allowances that are fair, helpful and consistent across the rider population.

TRIP in Riverside established and uses an Eligibility Determination Committee (EDC) to make efficient and consistent allowance determinations. The committee includes members of community stakeholder groups and representatives of funding agencies and carefully evaluates the needs and capabilities of each applicant. This committee approach brings a wide perspective of expertise to each deliberation, helps to ensure that fair and reasonable allowances are granted, and provides intimate knowledge and appreciation of how funds are being used and connecting real people and real needs through the process.

The unique design of TRIP Riverside's EDC insures ease of committee administration and predictable and consistent attendance by members.

WE WILL FORM AND USE THE ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION COMMITTEE APPROACH TO ESTABLISHING MILEAGE AND PURPOSE ALLOWANCES.

STEP 6 – ARRANGING FOR NEEDED INSURANCE

Providing transportation will always pose risks related for the service, its drivers, its riders, and its sponsors. And, providing transportation assistance, especially door-to-door and door-through-door assistance, has been thought to increase the normal exposure to potential liability for property damage and bodily injury.

A common belief among policy makers and organizations that are considering the establishment of a volunteer driver service in their community is that the undertaking is very risky and holds potential for crippling liability losses. The belief is that volunteer driver services require that volunteers recruited by an organization receive background checks and training (both things that cost money). Not having seen any empirical evidence to support these beliefs, a risk and liability survey of fifty-three programs that use volunteer drivers in twenty-four states with a combined operational history of 747 years was administered. A startling survey finding is that *the volunteer driver organizations participating in the study had not experienced any liability losses*. Paramount among the variety of risk avoidance and mitigation strategies used by the agencies and organizations included in the survey is reliance on insurance protection. The full report is available at: http://ilpconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Risk-Liability-Loss-Experience-in-Volunteer-Driver-Services_REPORT.pdf

It is a fact that organizations “own” volunteers as de facto employees the more closely associated with the volunteers. If volunteers are told when to work and where to be and what to do, they become employees in the eyes of the law. The TRIP, rider centered, model does not manage the volunteer drivers that are recruited by the riders. Insurance professionals that we have consulted agree that the “arm’s length” relationship that TRIP maintains with service volunteers reduces the risk to the service sponsor and its funders.

Following the TRIP model precisely does not mean that insurance is not needed. The minimum insurance that should be secured for a TRIP model service program, when riders recruit their own volunteer drivers and volunteers use their own vehicles and rides are exclusively arranged between the riders and their volunteers, is commercial liability insurance and non-owned auto coverage. An organization’s existing commercial liability insurance may include coverage of the volunteer service program. A mix of volunteer models was included in the survey and report, accidents did occur and some claims were filed, but all organizations maintained insurance that protected them from liability losses.

By comparison, when a program recruits, screens and trains volunteers and then matches them with riders and schedules rides, more insurance coverage is called for. Also, when volunteers may be construed as being associated with a program or organization and as those volunteers are permitted or encouraged to provide higher levels of service that may take them into rider homes, a higher level of insurance coverage is suggested. This may include increased amounts of commercial general liability insurance, as well as social service professional liability, business auto liability, volunteer insurance, and improper sexual conduct liability. It is surmisable that volunteers directly associated with a sponsoring organization may

view the organization as having potential for litigative exploitation. If I am a friend of and a volunteer for low income Mary, it is probably less likely that I might consider suing her.

Insurance underwriters are trained to analyze risk associated with business practices and recommend levels of coverage appropriate to their determinations. More than one opinion should be sought. Consult non-profit risk management centers and similar organizations for unbiased assessments.

Compare recommended insurance companies for such things as AA Best Rating, equivalent product premium pricing, willingness and capability to defend clients if necessary, and track recorded of claim payment. Two primary insurers of volunteer programs include Nonprofits' Insurance Alliance Group, which currently writes coverage in 30 states and the District of Columbia. In California, insurance is available through the Nonprofit Insurance Alliance of California. The for-profit CIMA Companies and other commercial insurance companies also write insurance coverage for volunteer driver programs.

If the TRIP service that you are planning will be conducted by a municipality or government agency, consult with risk management and follow existing rules and regulations. Organizations of this type that were included in the Risk, Liability and Loss survey and report tended to be self-insured.

List needed insurance and annual premium:

- Commercial general liability _____
- Non-owned auto _____

A TRIP program design, in which riders recruit their own drivers and volunteer drivers use their own vehicles, should carry commercial general liability and non-owned auto insurance. If a program recruits, screens, schedules rides and matches volunteers with riders, the following types of insurance coverage should be considered:

- Social service professional liability _____
- Business auto liability _____
- Volunteer insurance _____
- Improper sexual conduct liability _____
- OTHER: _____

Total Annual Insurance Premium _____

(Additional discussion of Risk, Liability and Insurance is posted in the FAQ section at <http://ilpconnect.org/risk-and-liability/>)

STEP 7 – HOW THE OFFICE WILL BE ORGANIZED

A very minimum amount of office equipment and office space is required for the TRIP model service program when operated according to the classic model design. It can easily be operated from a desk and space donated to the project in a senior or community center, a church office, a city office, at a medical center, a real estate office – just about anywhere. Another option is to co-locate with a host on a sublet basis, paying for a very small space (100 square feet is enough).

In terms of equipment, a computer with basic office software will be required. A reliable printer is also required. An all-in-one-printer is ideal – printer, copier, scanner and fax all-in-one. For printing reimbursement checks a black and white laser printer is recommended. A little effort could also result in the computer equipment being donated to the cause.

In terms of furniture, a start-up service will require one desk and chair and a locking file cabinet. A telephone with a minimum of two lines and an answering machine will be required. A high-speed Internet connection is recommended for connection through the dedicated private virtual network link that is provided to the TripTrak™ database. A subscription to the TripTrak™ administration, management and reporting application allows access to the service's dedicated database from any authorized computer.

Purposes for internet accessibility might also include the ability to research health conditions, and establish mileage between origination and destination points. If the TRIP service is co-located in an existing agency or organization, internet access might also be donated by the hosting organization or business.

A bank account will need to be opened. Shop around. Many financial institutions provide business checking accounts for non-profits without monthly expense. Utility services need to be arranged. If co-located, the cost of these services may be donated or a very minor addition to the monthly space lease cost.

Organizing the service office through co-location can result in fewer hours of operation by paid or volunteer employees each day. Calls can be covered and routed to the service answering machine without requiring staff to be in the office during all normal business hours every day.

Location of office will be: _____

Details of arrangements made: _____

Initial Expense (if any): _____

MONTHLY EXPENSE (if any): _____

Acquisition of computer equipment: _____
Details of arrangements made: _____

Initial Expense (if any): _____
MONTHLY EXPENSE (if any): _____

TripTrak™ subscription: _____
Details of arrangements made: _____

Initial Expense (if any): _____
MONTHLY EXPENSE (if any): _____

Acquisition of office furniture: _____
Details of arrangements made: _____

Initial Expense (if any): _____
MONTHLY EXPENSE (if any): _____

Acquisition of telephone and services: _____
Details of arrangements made: _____

Initial Expense (if any): _____
MONTHLY EXPENSE (if any): _____

Set-up internet services: _____
Details of arrangements made: _____

Initial Expense (if any): _____
MONTHLY EXPENSE (if any): _____

Hook-up of electric, gas and water: _____

Details of arrangements made: _____

Initial Expense (if any): _____

MONTHLY EXPENSE (if any): _____

Usual office supplies will include:

- Printer ink
- Copy paper
- Pens, pencils and note pads
- Blank check stock
- File cabinet hanging folders
- File folders and labels
- 3-ring binders
- Hole punch and stapler

STEP 8 – STAFFING THE SERVICE

The TRIP model service program requires minimum staffing.

Basic work responsibilities include:

- Informing service providers and the general public about the availability and features of the service
 - Mailing letters and fliers
 - Arranging and conducting in-service trainings for area organizations and agencies
 - Making follow-up phone calls
 - Depending on the scale of service introduction that is chosen, contacting the media and sending news releases may also be an outreach responsibility.
- Explaining the service and processing rider applications and data entry
- Scheduling and conducting Eligibility Determination Committee meetings
- Mailing enrollment notification packages and forms to those approved for service
- Making follow-up phone calls to riders to assist them with effective use of the service, including recruitment of volunteer drivers and completion of request for reimbursement forms
- Answering calls from riders and updating contact records
- Answering calls from partner organizations and public inquiries about the service
- Processing monthly request for reimbursement forms, updating contact and activity records and entering monthly travel data
- Issuing and mailing mileage reimbursement checks
- Bookkeeping, checking account reconciliation
- Completing performance reports
- Attending networking meetings
- On-going fund development and grant submissions (depending on sponsor relationships and funding status).

For a start-up TRIP model service program, this position could initially require a 20 hour per week time commitment. It could be staffed by one or more volunteers, or one or more paid employees. Paid employees can be already working for a sponsor organization, with expanded time allotted to administration of the TRIP service program, or may be hired as a dedicated employee. The ideal program administrator should be a passionate advocate with counseling and operations experience.

Program administrator status: _____

Details of arrangements made: _____

MONTHLY EXPENSE (if any): _____

By comparison, a non-TRIP volunteer driver centered service requires staffing for these additional job responsibilities:

Volunteer Related Responsibilities:

- Volunteer outreach
- Processing volunteer applications, which will probably include DMV and criminal background checks, as well as reference checking
- Possibly, volunteer driver training
- Volunteer recognition

Ride Scheduling:

- Processing requests for transportation
- Matching volunteer availability with rider needs
- Contacting volunteers and scheduling rides
- Follow-up to insure service is provided as needed.

If you are considering divergence from the TRIP model structure, consider the additional staffing and processing expense that will be incurred:

Volunteer manager **EXPENSE:**_____

Volunteer application, driving record and background check **EXPENSE:**_____

Volunteer training **EXPENSE:**_____

Ride scheduler **EXPENSE:**_____

STEP 9 – SETTING UP THE RIGHT SERVICE ENVIRONMENT

Standards of Care

It has been the experience of TRIP over the years that consistent and considerate treatment of riders, volunteer drivers, and community stakeholders provides a foundation for building satisfaction and limiting operational risk. The TRIP model focuses on fair and even treatment of riders and volunteer drivers that is the same all the time. The following Standards of Care are an essential part of all TRIP service programs:

- Always be courteous and respectful.
- Always be objective, professional and fair.
- Always be attentive and listen carefully.
- Always be patient, understanding and caring.
- Always provide clear and complete answers and instructions.
- Always remain responsive, tactful and helpful.
- Always follow through on commitments and promises.
- Always be a supportive friend.

Keep Complete and Appropriate Records

Good record keeping is an important part of the accountability of organizations to those who use their services and to those who provide funding for the service. They provide a reliable summary of contact exchanges, decisions made and the reasons for them, service use history and performance. Accurate and complete records are an essential source of evidence for reviews, investigations and referrals to other agencies or services. Complete records provide the means for appropriate fiduciary and outcome reporting to funders and policy makers, and are necessary when forecasting future use, completing grant applications, or negotiating fee-for-service contracts. The TripTrak™ application makes thorough and accurate record keeping easy.

Issue Regular Reports of Performance

A critical part of planning, staffing, and budgeting is knowing what has been accomplished, how much it cost, and how much good resulted. This is absolutely essential to insure a continuing stream of positive public opinion and financial support. The success of your TRIP service program will depend on how long, loudly and clearly you honk your horn. Tell everyone. Reports assist board members, policy makers and funders to appreciate the value of the service program.

Planning for future staffing requirements and budgeting to achieve performance success for upcoming periods requires a solid basis of service program experience. Monthly, quarterly and annual reports of performance statistics are necessary to understand what has happened and what needs to be done next.

Performance statistics, dollars spent, rides provided, are only half of the equation though. Knowing exactly how the service helped riders, volunteers and the community at large, is perhaps even more important. The TripTrak™ application makes complete and accurate reporting easy.

Conduct Periodic Rider and Volunteer Surveys

Surveys of rider and volunteer satisfaction help keep the service on track. Quality assessment surveys are essential to learn how the provided services actually benefit both riders and volunteers. It is critical to know what is working well and what may not be working just right so that continual adjustments in service delivery can be made.

Regularly collected survey data will define the impact and outcomes resulting from your service. Regularly ask for and collect testimonials about the outcomes that have been achieved for riders and volunteers and, of course, get signed releases to use this information in assertive public relations.

STEP 10 – FINANCIAL RESOURCES NEEDED

Perhaps financial support for the first year of operation of the volunteer driver transportation program has already been secured. If that is the case, the service program's operation can be scaled to a level dictated by the funding that is available. As the service grows, additional sources of funding will need to be secured. *If funding is not already promised, securing financing of the service is a major primary step.*

Many sources of funding have been available to volunteer driver programs over the years:

- Fee-for-service contracts with local and county governments
- Older Americans Act grants
- Federal New Freedom, JARC and 5310 grants
- Charitable donations from individuals
- Fund raising events
- Donations from community groups
- Foundation grants
- In-kind contributions
- Unrelated business income
- Business and sponsor subsidies.

Other sources of service financing may come from in-kind contributions, and individual bequests. Local transportation funds from municipalities served by the program may be available. Some programs raise unrelated business income through the sale of things like calendars that feature images of service success. Adult children of seniors can be a source of charitable giving to support the care of their parent and others like them in the community. One organization sells "sponsor a ride" tickets in different denominations at service clubs and to the general public.

Sources of funds to support a TRIP volunteer driver service program are as unlimited as the imagination and commitment of those who operate them. The use of collaborative in-kind relationships and reliance on volunteers to provide TRIP service makes programs very adaptable to any level of resources. Programs can start with very limited funding, serve as many as possible, secure additional funding and expand when possible. Lesson Learned: Proven, effective, efficient and low-cost performance results in the availability of more community support and increased funding possibilities.

Ultimately state and federal funding policies should change to establish reliable transportation equity for people of all levels of mobility capability.

STEP 11 – ESTABLISHING THE BUDGET

TRIP is a low cost, low maintenance service program model. Its operations require limited staff and infrastructure because it is not required to recruit for drivers, nor is it required to train or support drivers, or schedule and arrange for rides. Completion of Step 1 through Step 9 will provide the basis to begin development of the budget for your service program.

1ST YEAR TRIP MODEL BUDGET *	CASH	IN-KIND OR VOLUNTEER
REVENUES		
Donations		
Grant Revenues (Attach list and detail)		
Charter/Contract Revenue (Attach list and detail)		
Local Transportation Funds		
State Funds		
Federal Operating Funds		
Fundraising		
Other Sources of Revenues (BE CREATIVE)		
TOTAL REVENUES		
EXPENSES		
Salaries and Benefits by Position		
A. Operations Manager		
B. Clerical and Data Entry		
C. Bookkeeper or Accounting		
D. Other (Attach list and detail)		
Total Salaries & Benefits		
Non-Personnel Expenses:		
Insurance: Liability and D&O		
Insurance: Volunteer Drivers		
Insurance: Volunteer/NON-owned auto		
Marketing/Advertising		
Postage		
Printing		
Rent		
Repairs & Maintenance		
Office Supplies		
Telephone		
Training/Staff Development		
Travel & Meeting Expenses		
Utilities		
Volunteer Mileage Reimbursement Incentives		
Other (Attach list and detail)		
Contribution to Reserve		
Total Non-Personnel Expenses		
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES		

- * The greater number of expense line items that can be satisfied through an in-kind or volunteer contribution, the lower the cost of the program will be or the more funds will be available to provide needed rides. In general, the more collaborative your service program is, the stronger the community support that it will enjoy. Sharing resources with another organization or a sponsoring agency has the potential to contribute significant cost savings benefits to both organizations. In the start-up phase, one employee may be tasked with full operation of the service.

STEP 12 – REQUIRED INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

The basic information storage and data management functions of your TRIP service will require:

- Applicant information
 - Contact information
 - Demographic information, age, gender
 - Mobility restrictions and special needs
- Application processing history
 - Completed application
 - Physician statements (if required)
 - A timeline of phone call contacts
 - Eligibility determinations
- Enrollment service allowances
 - Trip purposes allowed
 - Trip mileage allowances
 - Monthly mileage allowances
 - Types of drivers allowed
- Volunteer information
 - Contact information for emergency purposes
 - (possibly) Performance data for award selection
- Service details
 - Periodic mileage reimbursement request data
 - One-way trips provided
 - Record of mileage reimbursed per enrollee and cumulatively (perhaps also by funding source)
 - Mileage reimbursements payment data (check number, date paid, amount of payment)
 - Continuous record of service history and contacts with enrollees and volunteer drivers
 - Details of changes in enrollee service eligibility (changes in allowances, discontinuation of service)
 - Generation of statistical reports.

The TripTrak™ specialty TRIP application integrates all of these requirements into one seamless administrative environment. TripTrak™ is the software application that was developed by TRIP, and has been used by TRIP Riverside for more than ten years. This administrative application has been continually upgraded and is now available as a Virtual Private Cloud subscription service. More information about this resource is available at: <http://ilpconnect.org/store/>

STEP 13 – ESTABLISHING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Many decisions have already been made about who will be eligible for your service and what level of service will be provided. Now an orderly and consistent procedure needs to be developed to insure fairness to service program applicants and insure compliance with established policies.

To get started, a basic outline of the application and enrollment process for your program is needed. First, how will an application be completed?

- An application will be taken by telephone. (This is the procedure that has been used successfully by TRIP in Riverside for many years now and is recommended to make the process as convenient as possible for applicants.) TripTrak™ includes an integrated electronic application that can be printed and sent to applicants for review and signature.
- An application will be mailed to applicants to be completed and returned. (Originally TRIP in Riverside used this method, but abandoned the practice as inefficient because of the additional employee hours that were required.)
- Other: _____

What information will be collected? (Check all that apply.)

- Contact information
- Demographic data
- Housing status
- Health status information
- Physician's health status verification
- Mobility status information
- Current transportation capabilities
- Transportation needs
- Other: _____

Once the application is completed, procedures need to be put in place to consistently and fairly determine the eligibility of applicants and set appropriate service allowances. We recommend that a volunteer committee, which we call the Eligibility Determination Committee (EDC), be convened to meet regularly for this purpose. Using the easily manageable EDC approach avoids criticism that determinations, enrollment and allowance awards made by a single individual are subjective and unfair.

When you develop a review committee, we suggest you include representatives from service funders, one or more members of the senior and disabled communities, and members of your board of directors. Consensus for eligibility and service level allowance will provide an element of impartial objectivity to the process and help to validate decisions that are made. If applicants appeal eligibility or service determinations and are told the matter has been referred back to the Eligibility Determination Committee, it becomes useless for the complainant to harass individual staff members.

A regular schedule of committee meetings should be scheduled – normally every two weeks should be sufficient. Constituting a committee with 20 members and scheduling only 2 of the 20 to attend any given meeting means that the commitment for any one member to attend a meeting would be one time every two and a half months or so.

Including committee participation by representatives of service funders, members of the senior and disability community and organizational board members provides deep engagement and understanding of the service, its importance and of the people that it serves.

- An Eligibility Committee will be convened and make eligibility and service level determinations – the Committee will meet on the following schedule:

- Representatives of the following agencies and organizations will be invited to sit on the EDC:

STEP 14 – INSURING NECESSARY COMMUNICATIONS ESSENTIALS

Effective operation of a TRIP service requires regular telephone contact with riders. TRIP is designed primarily with the intention of being supportive of older adults and persons with disabilities who are “transportation deprived”. Often, members of this service target suffer from declining capabilities, low income and lack a strong social network. The program must strive to be a friend to the riders it serves, as it expects riders and volunteer drivers to operate from a relationship based on friendship.

In our experience, this is an essential TRIP model element that will help increase the probability of success of a program. A friendly ear and having someone to talk with endears the service to those who use it. Only through regular conversation is it possible to search out ways to encourage and support riders for successful service program use.

Outreach to new enrollees helps them get off on the right foot and improves their ability to use the service appropriately and successfully. Also, maintaining a high level of communication with riders and volunteer drivers alerts staff for follow-up to possible program misuse or changes in rider capabilities and need.

Telephone courtesy protocol should emphasize prompt and courteous communications with riders, volunteers, colleagues and all public contacts. Riders and volunteers must be treated with respect, and given focused attention every time there is contact. A question or concern should never be regarded as an interruption or annoyance. Rider and volunteer driver Inquiries, whether in person, by telephone, email or fax should be addressed promptly and professionally. Through staff conduct the riders and volunteers need to feel that they are highly regarded and will receive the help that is requested. A good rule to follow is that if a staff member is unable to help a program participant or answer their questions, someone will be found who can.

The transportation issues facing many older adults and persons with disabilities are complex and individual. This is where the difficulty in meeting the needs of this constituency arises: there is no single or simple answer for everyone.

Any effective system of service must be able to adapt to each individual’s circumstances. Ideally, the goal of special transportation is to help older adults and people with disabilities, who may be homebound or living in isolation, regain transportation mobility and independence and re-establish community connections and access needed services.

Regular contact with service program participants is required to make sure that the transportation needs of the rider are being met, that riders are able to understand how to successfully maximize their use of the TRIP service program and to assist riders to adjust what they are doing so that they are getting the transportation they need. A schedule of rotating contacts, with periodic calls to all riders, should be established.

Suggested call points might include:

- Follow-ups to all attempted applications to insure that the application is completed if the service is really needed
- Calls in advance of mailing of package or forms to alert rider to watch for the mail
- Calls following approval of application to inform rider of their approved status and answer any questions they might have
- Calls if problems are observed with form completion or if rider is not sending in mileage request forms in a timely fashion
- Calls if someone, who regularly sends in mileage request forms, stops sending them in
- Random calls to verify that riders are satisfied with the service they are receiving and to demonstrate concern for their well-being
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

A combination of regular contact, encouragement and coaching will assist both program participants and the service program to be successful.

STEP 15 – OUTREACH / MAKING IT HAPPEN

Ready to go? Let's find the people who need transportation. More often than not the best way of identifying those who require the special needs service that a TRIP program provides is through referrals from other services. If your service is only interested in serving those who really require assistance and do not have the ability to use other alternatives, the best route to those community residents is through referral.

Those who would best be in positions of making appropriate referrals include health service providers, social workers, in-home support service agencies, adult protective services, a community services referral call center, senior and community centers, faith based organizations, public transportation services, and so forth. The first step is to determine who to link with:

Government leaders: _____

Municipal services: _____

Senior services: _____

Disability services: _____

Health services: _____

Social services: _____

Community service groups: _____

Religious groups: _____

Transportation services: _____

Area businesses: _____

Other: _____

Contact and coordinate with referral resources in multiple ways:

Send personal letter announcing the new service that is available and requesting referrals.

Follow-up on all letters sent with a phone call to answer any questions, offer an in-service and offer to provide service program brochures.

Meet with administrators, service directors, managers of referral resource organizations.

Provide in-services as requested.

Provide service program brochures, fliers and other materials as requested.

Formalize collaborative agreements, as feasible.

Other: _____

Other: _____

Traditional mass-media may be used, but might attract many unqualified applicants dependent upon the decisions that have been made regarding service areas, applicant qualifications and purpose allowances that you have made. Traditional mass-media also might not reach the people who you have identified as those you want to serve. Another consideration is whether or not service program funding is sufficient to support services for a large number of area residents. You might want to consider using these outreach methods:

- News release
- Newspaper ads
- Shopper ads
- Public service announcements on radio and television
- Radio ads
- Cable television ads
- Ask local utilities to include notices with monthly bills
- Post notices in grocery stores
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

ON-GOING PROGRAM SUPPORT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

NOTE: You may be authorized to use the TRIP designation as part of your service program name, including the right to use the TRIP name and logo for your service, if your service includes these “key features”:

- Your program is a TRUE TRIP model program with only minor variations.
- Your drivers are volunteers.
- Enrolled riders recruit their own volunteers.
- Rides are free to riders (you may request unspecified donations so long as making a donation is not a condition of receiving a ride).
- Private vehicles are used to provide the rides.

1. **You will find the answers to most, if not all, of your questions in the *Frequently Asked Questions* section at <http://ilpconnect.org/triptrans/>**
2. Training with TRIP in Riverside is recommended, but not required.
The cost of the 2 day training is \$375 per person. Additional days of training may be added at a cost of \$175 per day (six hours). Trainees are responsible for their own travel and lodging. Up to 3 people from a single agency or organization may attend.
3. On-line business model and program implementation training is available from TRIP Riverside. The cost of one-on-one training is \$55 for the first hour and \$35 for each additional hour.
4. The virtual private cloud administration, management and reporting TripTrak™ application is available for subscription at: <http://ilpconnect.org/store/>

NOTE: All prices are subject to change without notice.