

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Volunteer Driver Program in California Proves It's World-Class Again

**TRIP program is a serious transportation option  
for low-income, sick, disabled and elderly**

**Riverside, CA – August 2, 2016** – For the program year from last July through the end of this June over eleven hundred TRIP Program riders received 119,555 free trips and 1.67 million miles of assisted rides to doctors, grocery stores and other needed destinations. The rides provided during the program year were the equivalent of circling the earth 78.6 times!!



Nearly all TRIP riders require TRIP to enable them to access needed medical services, but overall 30% of the 119,555 trip purposes were for medical reasons, 20% to grocery stores, 18% for other subsistence purposes, and the remaining 38,000 trips were for purposes that enhance the quality of life of the rider. Remember that TRIP riders are low-income, sick, elderly, disabled and alone people who do not drive, cannot use public transportation options and generally have no family members to assist them. Without TRIP most would be basically homebound.

In every community there are people who would be classified as transportation underserved. These are people who live in an area without public or other transportation services or where minimal services are provided and have disabilities or suffer from chronic or serious illnesses or mental impairments that limit their mobility.

Even though access to medical services is a critical objective of the program, TRIP riders are also able to travel with their volunteer drivers for other purposes that enhance the quality of their lives, alleviate the stress of needing transportation and not having it,

*Since I cannot drive myself, TRIP has made it possible for me to keep in touch with friends and family and broadened opportunities for socialization, an invaluable thing to a disabled and aged person.*

maintain continued social connections, and improve their psychological outlook. We just received a letter from a 90 year old, wheelchair bound woman who has been receiving TRIP assistance since 2007. She recently had to move to another town that is

outside of TRIP Riverside's service area and she wrote us to tell us her thoughts about the service. In addition to transportation to "various medical offices in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties", she gives testimony to the "invaluable" impact of the service on her quality of life. She wrote, "TRIP has made it possible for me to keep in touch with friends and family and broadened opportunities for socialization..."

According to Richard Smith, TRIP General Manager, "TRIP is a cost effective and efficient program for those who are the most difficult and expensive to serve." Smith says, "The subsidy per passenger mile for TRIP this year was forty-one cents and that cost to underwrite a special needs transportation service is nearly unbelievable." In fact, the cost of transit door-to-door van services is more likely to be something like three dollars or more per passenger mile, according to Smith.

The TRIP volunteer driver mileage reimbursement service for Riverside County was created in 1993 and is a program of the nonprofit Independent Living Partnership. The volunteer driver mileage reimbursement service for Riverside is mostly funded through Federal 5310, Riverside County Transportation Commission, and Riverside County Office on Aging Older Americans Act grants. The Riverside County Transportation Commission and the Riverside County Office on Aging helped design the innovative service and have provided funding continuously since the service began.

TRIP is a rider-centered volunteer program that includes rider responsibilities that enables them to get the transportation they require. Riders are able to recruit their own volunteer drivers from among friends and neighbors. If riders have a problem getting volunteers, TRIP staff coaches them on effective ways to ask people around them who they may have overlooked. Enrolled riders receive mileage reimbursement payments to give to their volunteer drivers. This makes it easier for riders to recruit their own drivers in a straightforward business relationship and helps to cement that relationship so that friendship and bonding is able to develop.

More information about the TRIP volunteer driver mileage reimbursement program is available on the Independent Living Partnership's website [LPconnect.org](http://LPconnect.org).

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