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*The Transportation Option  
that Will Solve Difficult Challenges*



*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 rated TRIP as  
.....“the nation’s best volunteer driver model”*

# How to Start a TRIP Service in Your Community

## *Manual*

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**self-reliance.**

**independence.**

**freedom.**

These values must never be lost. Age, the loss of family and friends, the loss of financial security, sickness or disability can conspire to limit capability and means. In these circumstances the spirit of hope may need a little push.

We have proven the only thing needed is for useable, reliable, accessible and affordable transportation to again be available. And even better when it includes a companion for sometimes difficult trips to doctors.

That's the innovative TRIP Program, started by the non-profit Independent Living Partnership twenty-five years ago and now over 2 million trips old. We are ready to assist communities across the country to also start and operate efficient and effective volunteer driver mileage reimbursement services.



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## INTRODUCTION

TRIP is capable of delivering rides to people who would not be able to access and use transit options due to physical or mental disabilities, the lack of scheduled service or financial hardship.

The first application of the “rider centered” and empowering service was implemented in Riverside County California twenty-five years ago by the Independent Living Partnership (ILP). Beginning with a few riders needing transportation for medical access and therapeutic care, or to be able to get groceries or to access supportive services, now more than 1,000 elderly and disabled residents of the county are able to get the transportation they need.

Beginning over a decade ago, agencies and organizations in other places in California and in other areas of the country began using this innovative approach to solve mobility issues for their clients and customers. Using the TripTrak™ database application, developed by ILP, a full TRIP services can be fully administered, monitored and reported.

From an organizational perspective, TRIP delivers the most transportation assistance at the lowest expense. It 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.

TRIP has a record of proven effectiveness, many millions of miles, and millions of volunteer assisted trips. It simplifies volunteer recruitment by helping riders recruit their own drivers, resulting in low cost and low program risk. Because riders and volunteers arrange their own rides, 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.

We are glad to share what we have learned over the years to help others provide similar services in their communities. Our surveys of TRIP riders have shown that TRIP provides the transportation that people have been lacking and needing, and at a fraction of the cost of alternatives. TRIP is versatile. It has been adapted and is used by community services organizations, social services agencies, and transit agencies.

TRIP surveys of riders over the years have shown that TRIP transportation helps improve the quality of life of those it serves. 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 over many years of surveys, 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 TRIP:

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 beginning to operate 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 step-by-step and time saving way.

Technical assistance is available for start-ups and on-going TRIP model services, including subscription to the TripTrak™ management application. More information about supportive services is available at [www.ILPconnect.org](http://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 operating a TRIP service is that you secure operations funding that will extend beyond a start-up grant.* Federal funding has been a source of funding for many start-ups and continues to sustain their operations. Other grants, foundation, state, regional and local, provide support for many services. Some services have secured endowments, have sponsors, or partner with adult and disability community organizations. 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 should be "priority one", always.

## 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 a service is to provide transportation for underserved and unserved people living in our communities:

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

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 transportation 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™ database application, which was designed specifically to administer and report service performance. In fact, TripTrak™ includes a report that generates standard performance measures of one-way trips, riders served, cost per one-way trip, miles of service provided, subsidy per passenger mile, average miles per trip, average number of service miles per rider, and more.

The success enjoyed by existing TRIP services over the years is the result of following the innovative design of TRIP, implementing some basic operational TRIP policies and procedures, and on-going management through the application of solid business practices.

Key features of a successful TRIP model service program include:

1. **Volunteer drivers** - *When volunteer drivers are used exclusively and paid drivers are not used a number of major expenses go away including compensation, tax reporting, and insurance expense is drastically minimized.*

Also, there is a significant difference in relationships that result from the interaction of paid drivers and riders. While paid drivers have been shown to be caring and considerate of their riders, the nature of the relationship between a paid driver and a rider is sometimes constrained by the fact that both know the driver is being paid to provide the service. The true TRIP model is “rider centered”, unlike the common old-style “volunteer centered” model. TRIP emphasizes friendship and building relationships that are socially empowering for the rider.

It is pretty typical that someone may think that seniors are not capable of taking care of themselves. We often hear this sentiment expressed in public meetings and around planning tables. *HOWEVER, the only way that a TRIP model service can be successful is WHEN there is belief and conviction that mobility poor residents in a community can be self-reliant.*

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. The ability to self-recruit volunteers is enhanced by a promise to pay mileage reimbursement for the drivers who volunteer to help.

It is common that the first thing an applicant for service might say, when conditioned to expect others to take care of them, is "I don't know anyone", when in fact we have discovered over the years that what that 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. For several years we tried it the "hybrid" way, with volunteers recruited by riders and a

pool of volunteers recruited by the agency, and found that we could eliminate the considerable and unnecessary costs associated with recruitment, screening, and scheduling volunteer drivers, give those responsibilities to riders, and instead put all of those 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 more rides.*

Also the thought that a pool of volunteers is needed, "should the senior not be able to find a driver" presupposes failure and guarantees a considerable lack of commitment from both the organization in encouraging and facilitating rider autonomy and service participants in achieving the social network building that not only makes TRIP efficient and effective, but also brings health to the community. 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?

2. **Riders** - There are a number of other reasons that TRIP requires 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 of TRIP for America at [LPconnect.org](http://LPconnect.org). Also the report of a study of "Risk, Liability, and Loss Experience of Volunteer Driver Services" is available in the Related Information section of TRIP for America.*)

- 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.

**PROGRAM WILL ONLY USE VOLUNTEER DRIVERS**

MAIN VOLUNTEER DRIVER EXPENSE WILL BE MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

Program might want to use paid drivers, all or a percentage

**(NOT RECOMMENDED)**

ESTIMATED ANNUAL EXPENSE: \_\_\_\_\_

(INCLUDE: HIRING, WAGES, TAXES, BENEFITS, SCREENING, TRAINING, SUPERVISION AND INSURANCE COSTS.)

3. **Fees** – TRIP, as designed, 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 volunteer derives program income, issues with insurance and tax reporting of “volunteer” income arise. Risk and liability are shifted completely to the sponsoring organization. TRIP 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 the 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 and, in general, people with low income tend to be the largest unserved and underserved group
- 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 you are considering charging fees, we suggest that you contact legal, insurance and tax professionals.)

There are many ways, other than requiring payment from riders, to underwrite operations and the payment of mileage reimbursements. Donations may be requested from riders (typically the riders in the TRIP programs have very low income and are unable to make donations). Donations may also be requested from the 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.

**RIDERS WILL NOT BE CHARGED FOR THE RIDES THEY RECEIVE**

Program will charge riders \$\_\_\_\_\_ per ride

**(NOT RECOMMENDED)**

ESTIMATED ANNUAL EXPENSE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. # of riders x miles of travel allowed x reimbursement rate – this calculation can be approached from the front, target number of riders to be served, or alternatively starting with the amount of funding available, the miles to be allowed and the rate to be paid and working back to determine the # of riders that can be served.

2. Operation's expense to include rent, payroll, supplies and printing, postage, utilities, insurance, etc.

REVENUES EXPECTED FROM FEES: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Not possible to be of significance in off-setting service expenses.

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 and paid up to the maximum allowance limits granted to the rider.

TRIP 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. TRIP incentivizes rides for enrolled riders and also helps them learn to do more to take care of themselves. Implementing TRIP 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, TRIP 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.

**RIDERS WILL ARRANGE RIDES WITH THEIR OWN VOLUNTEER DRIVERS**

NO EXPENSE

Program will schedule needed rides with volunteers

**(NOT RECOMMENDED)**

ESTIMATED ANNUAL EXPENSE: \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Vehicles** - Private automobiles are used to provide the transportation. TRIP focuses 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. And perhaps, concerns about comfort and convenience are most important to TRIP model riders.

When a service program uses volunteer vehicles, vehicle acquisition and maintenance expenses are eliminated, program insurance expenses are reduced and a greater portion of available resources can go into providing rides instead of feeding the infrastructure animal.

**PRIVATE VEHICLES WILL BE USED TO TRANSPORT RIDERS**

ONLY EXPENSE IS MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT FOR VOLUNTEERS

Program will own autos, vans and/or busses

**(NOT RECOMMENDED)**

ESTIMATED ANNUAL EXPENSE: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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. It does seem, though, that the payment of mileage reimbursement functions to sort of cement the assistance relationship of the volunteer to the rider for repeated and continual assistance.

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 can change periodically) 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. TRIP 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.

The standard IRS rate has been more than .50 per mile for many years now, but it is not necessary to pay the standard rate. A higher rate might be used to increase the enthusiasm of volunteerism. In a TRIP program for Los Angeles County a rate of .48 per mile was successful in assisting riders to secure volunteer drivers when a rate of .35 per mile was not as successful.

For the rider, the ability to offer to contribute to the payment of gas expense makes it easier and more comfortable to initially ask a friend or neighbor to volunteer to assist with their transportation needs. 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.

Some TRIP services pay up to the maximum standard mileage reimbursement rate that is permitted by the IRS and others pay less in reimbursement per mile. TripTrak™ 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. 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 (updated 2017). 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.

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

1. To operate an effective program, you have to send out blank mileage reimbursement forms each month anyway and doing more than one thing for the same mailing expense makes sense
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 may go unnoticed in a rider's account or the account might be overdrawn and the deposit applied to the overdraw fees instead of being given to volunteers.

**MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENTS WILL BE PAID BY CHECK**

Mileage reimbursements will be paid through direct deposit

**(NOT RECOMMENDED)**

Program will provide gas cards for volunteers.

**(NOT RECOMMENDED)**

(Additional discussion of Mileage Reimbursement is included in STEP 5, Managing Capacity, and included under the TRIP for America tab in the FAQ section at [LPconnect.org](http://LPconnect.org) )

### STEP 3 – WHO CAN BE A VOLUNTEER DRIVER

Riders recruit their own volunteer drivers in a TRIP 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? Will there be income considerations?

We expect that all TRIP 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 and apparently 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 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? *TripTrak™ can set individual allowances and restrictions for riders as needed.*
- 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 takes off work and drives several times a month from another city 45 miles away to take his dad to the medical center for care and to the grocery store for supplies. 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:

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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:

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

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## 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?

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- Has a funding source outside your agency or organization specified the areas to be served?

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

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- 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. Would serving a population in a large and inclusive area result in increased funding opportunities? What might that area be?

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## STEP 5 – MANAGING CAPACITY

TRIP 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 TRIP service.

Altering the TRIP model to include additional paid positions or longer hours for paid employees for such purposes as volunteer recruitment, screening and training, or a form of program that requires centralized service scheduling of rides will use funds that could otherwise go to supporting more rides. Having paid drivers and/or owned vehicles will also tend to lower the system's capacity to provide more rides.

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.

### Mileage Reimbursement

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

TRIP 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 TRIP 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", your 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 trip is, "a one way trip is counted as complete each time a rider leaves a vehicle" at a destination.

TRIP 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 by most services (people do not know the address of most destinations). 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.

TripTrak™ supports other methods of recording travel and requesting mileage reimbursements in situations where exact address to address trips need to be documented. As you might expect though, the more detailed data entry needs to be, the more labor intensive management of mileage reimbursement payments is.

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. TRIP 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 California has never paid the full IRS standard mileage reimbursement rate in over 25 years of operation and paying a lower rate has enabled the support of more trips for more riders.

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 in TripTrak™ 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 is 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 will use the full amount allowed each month. Also, because TRIP is a volunteer friends approach, the travel assistance provided by the volunteer driver is not likely to stop when one-way distance 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 start-up 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 and is enforced for each individual riders through TripTrak™. 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 50 mile per month mileage allowance.

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. It is the payment of some reasonable amount that encourages the volunteer supported trip and the result is that mileage beyond the number of miles paid often results, 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 –

Travel Purposes

Another variable that can be set in TripTrak™ for the entire group of riders that are served or discretely for each rider based on individual considerations is the range of 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 result in 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: \_\_\_\_\_

## 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 might be appropriate and is enforceable on a per client basis by TripTrak™.

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. TRIP uses an Eligibility Determination Committee (EDC) to make efficient and consistent allowance determinations that are not dependent on the way one person might feel on any one day. An EDC should include members of community stakeholder groups, representatives of funding agencies, governing Board members, and people with specialized backgrounds, like social workers, retired doctors, nurses and so forth. The purpose of the EDC is to carefully evaluate the needs and capabilities of each applicant and establish individual service allowances or to decline service to applicants who do not meet policy criteria. 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 stakeholder knowledge and appreciation of how funds are being used and connecting real people and real needs through the process.



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

A large number of community representatives should be invited to serve on the EDC with a limited number of total committee members required to attend any one meeting. If there are twenty EDC members, the EDC meets 2 times a month and only 2 members are

needed to be at each meeting to make eligibility decisions, any one member will only need to attend a committee meeting once every 5 months. When the time commitment is maybe one hour every 5 months and the member has responsibility for making consensus decisions about individual applicant eligibility, it is relatively easy to build a volunteer committee.

Who should be invited to be on the Eligibility Determination Committee?

	Name	Representing
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

Consider the amount of influence each member can have on widening public awareness and on encouraging the support of TRIP in your community and try to maximize the impact of each member.

## **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 common apprehensions about huge risks associated with the operation of a volunteer driver transportation service, a risk and liability survey of fifty-three programs that have used volunteer drivers in twenty-four states with a combined operational history of 747 years was administered. A startling survey finding was 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 Risk Liability Loss Experience in Volunteer Driver Services report is available at: [ILPconnect.org](http://ILPconnect.org), under the TRIP for America tab, then Related Information.

It is a fact that organizations “own” volunteers as de facto employees when the volunteer drivers become closely associated with the organization. If volunteers are told when to work and where to be and what to do, they become employees in the eyes of the law. Rider-centered TRIP 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 organization that operates TRIP and its funders.

*Following TRIP precisely does not mean that insurance is not needed.* The minimum insurance that should be secured for a TRIP service, where 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.

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 “employees” of 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 may be suggested. This might include increased amounts of commercial general liability insurance, as well as social service professional liability insurance, 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. On the other hand, if I am a friend of and a volunteer for low income Mary, it is probably less likely that I might consider suing her.

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. A primary insurer of volunteer programs is the Nonprofits' Insurance Alliance Group, which currently writes coverage in 30+ states and the District of Columbia. 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 ILPconnect under the TRIP for America tab FAQ.)

## **STEP 7 – HOW THE OFFICE WILL BE ORGANIZED**

A very minimum amount of office equipment and office space is required for a TRIP program. 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).

A computer set-up and printer that are reasonably up-to-date with Internet to access the encryption gateway for a dedicated TripTrak™ database that is hosted on ILP cloud servers and basic office software will be required. A reliable 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.

A telephone with a minimum of two lines and an answering machine are needed. The Internet connection is needed in order to research health conditions, establish mileage between origination and destination points, and possibly check for alternatives that are also available for service applicants. The TripTrak™ administration, management and reporting application allows access to each service's dedicated database from any authorized computer. If the service program is co-located in an office, this capacity might also be donated by the hosting organization or business. In terms of furniture, a start-up service will require one desk and chair and a locking file cabinet.

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**

TRIP service program, when operated according to the classic model design, requires minimum staffing. (If altering the model to include volunteer driver recruitment and scheduling functions, the staffing requirement will double or triple!)

Basic work responsibilities for a TRIP model service program 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): \_\_\_\_\_

It is difficult to argue that altering TRIP service program to include volunteer driver recruitment and ride scheduling does not change your intended volunteer driver service into a typical volunteer driver service that is not a TRIP service. A non-TRIP 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 TRIP 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. TRIP 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.

TripTrak™ is a complete administration, management and reporting application that facilitates thorough data keeping, retrieval and reporting.

### 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.

### 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.*

In the Transportation Funding Report, published by STPExchange, it is clear that 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 and JARC 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 and we urge agencies and organizations to work towards expanding funding for volunteer driver services.

## 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.

For a TRIP model service use the following budget template.

<b>1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR TRIP MODEL BUDGET *</b>	<b>CASH</b>	<b>IN-KIND OR VOLUNTEER</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>		
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		
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>Salaries and Benefits by Position</b>		
A. Operations Manager		
B. Clerical and Data Entry		
C. Bookkeeper or Accounting		
D. Other (Attach list and detail)		
<b>Total Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>		
<b>Non-Personnel Expenses:</b>		
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		
<b>Total Non-Personnel Expenses</b>		
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>		

- \* 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.

If you are contemplating that your service program might include paid drivers, volunteer recruitment and training, ride scheduling, and so forth, the cost of operating the program will increase significantly above that of implementing a TRIP model service program. Higher program costs are directly related to staff salary expense and the service will be even less efficient when paid drivers and program owned vehicles are used to deliver the service.

The chart below provides a comparison of the cost of a one-way ride for traditional demand-response services and volunteer driver services.

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Demand Response Service</b>	<b>Volunteer Driver Program</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	<b>\$460,450</b>
<b>Cost Per Ride</b>	<b>\$37.94</b>	<b>\$7.73</b>

Cost per trip is calculated by dividing the full expense of providing the service during a period by the number of one-way trips that have been provided. The national standard transportation data base standard definition is that "a one way trip is counted as complete each time a rider leaves a vehicle". Cost per trip for a program can be lowered by:

1. decreasing total program operations expense
2. increasing the number of one-way trips provided

Transportation service providers often say that paid driver salaries constitute between 30 and 50 percent of their operating budget; and that vehicle purchase, operation, and maintenance constitute another 20 to 30 percent. For these reasons, volunteer driver and volunteer vehicle involvement can result in considerable savings. Other factors such as volunteer staff, in-kind contributions of space and equipment, and on-line scheduling and dispatch also can result in substantial cost savings.

The following budget template is provided for development of a first year service budget that includes expenses that are not necessary if operating a TRIP model service. Use the cost estimates that have already been developed in Steps 2,4,6,8 and 9 to complete the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Program Budget below. When complete, you may want to reconsider and possibly eliminate the more expensive operational characteristics from your program plan.

<b>1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR PROGRAM BUDGET</b>	<b>NOT TRUE TRIP MODEL</b>	<b>CASH</b>	<b>IN-KIND OR VOLUNTEER</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Rider Fares	<b>X</b>		
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			
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>			
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>Salaries and Benefits by Position</b>			
A. Operations Manager			
B. Paid Drivers	<b>X</b>		
D. Dispatch/Scheduler	<b>X</b>		
E. Trainer	<b>X</b>		
F. Volunteer Manager	<b>X</b>		
G. Clerical and Data Entry			
H. Bookkeeper or Accounting			
I. Other (Attach list and detail)			
<b>Total Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>			
<b>Non-Personnel Expenses:</b>			
Fuel/Oil	<b>X</b>		
General Office Expense			
Insurance: Liability and D&O			
Insurance: Owned Vehicle	<b>X</b>		
Insurance: Paid Drivers			
Insurance: Volunteer Drivers			
Insurance: Volunteer/NON-owned auto			
Marketing/Advertising			
Rent			
Repairs & Maintenance			
Telephone			
Training/Staff Development			
Travel & Meeting Expenses			
Utilities			
Volunteer Recruitment and Training	<b>X</b>		
Volunteer Screening and Background Checks	<b>X</b>		
Volunteer Recognition			
Volunteer Mileage Reimbursement Incentives			
Vehicle Maintenance	<b>X</b>		
Other (Attach list and detail)			
Contribution to Reserve			
<b>Total Non-Personnel Expenses</b>			
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>			

Operating TRIP model services have demonstrated that the expenses of a *non-TRIP model services are unnecessary and reduce the number of rides that a service will be able to provide.*

## 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.

TripTrak™ is a complete administration, management and reporting application that facilitates thorough data keeping, retrieval and reporting.



## 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.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

The following information should be collected.

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.

Use TripTrak™ to monitor the progress of applicant review, approval, and enrollment, and to control service allowances that are awarded to each approved applicant.

## **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, by design, 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: \_\_\_\_\_



# Community Answers Need for Transportation Options

## Program model identified by research has proven to be an effective choice

Community Senior Services (CSS), a nonprofit community service organization has now provided more than 250,000 trips and two million miles of volunteer transportation for senior and disabled residents who live in sixteen Southern California cities. Transportation was identified as the least available service in a 1975 community needs analysis and CSS decided to address the issue.

First CSS borrowed two vans from the Claremont Red Cross and began providing community rides. When the van service was operating CSS continued to research ways to provide more transportation services for seniors and discovered the innovative Transportation Reimbursement Information Program (TRIP) of the Independent Living Partnership (ILP) in Riverside County. ILP helped CSS get started by providing guidance to establish CSS's volunteer driver reimbursement, through-the-door, transportation program, which was named "Community Connections".

At about this time Federal funding for innovative transportation solutions, that would "go beyond" the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, was beginning to become available. In 2010 CSS was awarded a grant for their new Community Connections service from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA METRO) to provide volunteer assisted transportation services for senior and disabled residents in four communities.

Having gotten the new service up and running CSS received another grant a year later to add service for six additional cities in adjacent San Bernardino County. Two years after that LA METRO awarded more funding for service to six additional Los Angeles County cities.

The reason CSS received additional funding was due to the success of the program and the cost savings to riders utilizing the service. The CSS program design is so efficient that the average trip cost to CSS is under six dollars, less than half what it costs for public agency paratransit van trips.

Community Connections client, 65-year old Paulette from Chino, with multiple medical challenges, exemplifies public approval for the service provided saying "I just lost my husband recently and now I am alone. With the program I have something to look forward to, someone to talk to, help in everyday life. Without this program I would be lost."

Another client is reported to have said "After my surgery, I had to give up driving. When I signed up with Community Connections, it was like a burden was lifted. When you can depend on someone completely, your life is changed."

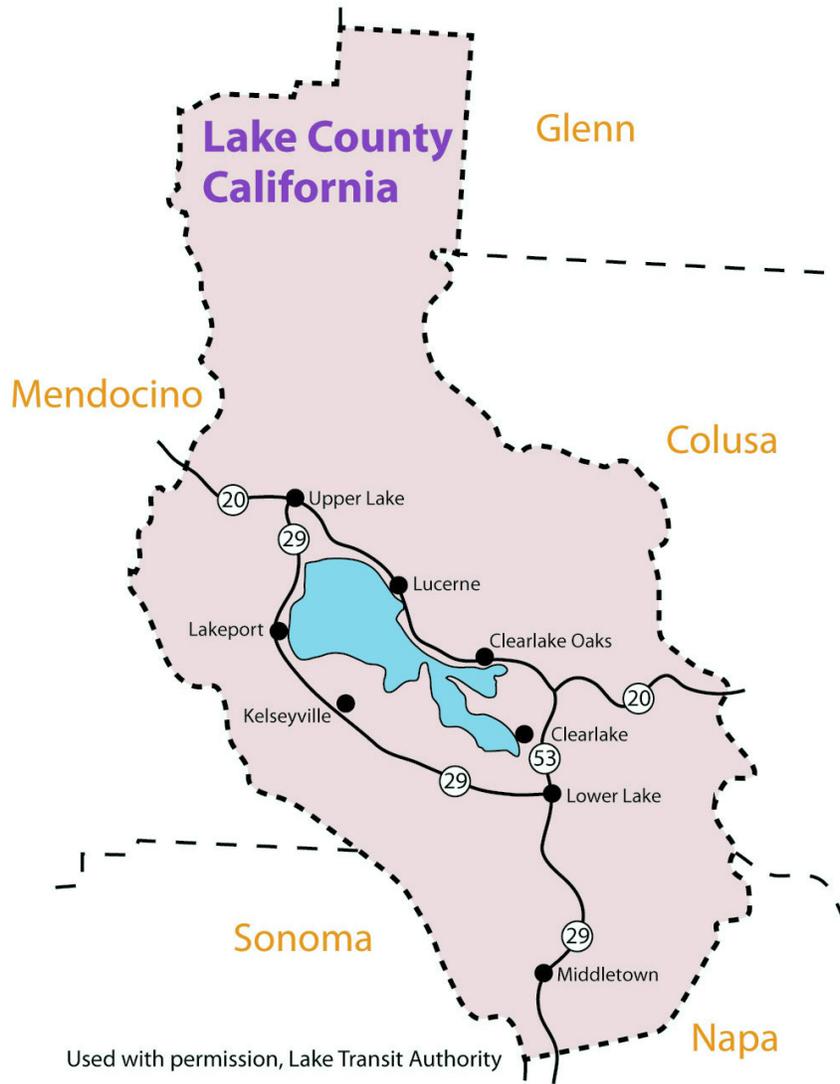
The Independent Living Partnership, creator of the rider focused TRIP volunteer driver model, assists agencies and organizations across the country to start and operate similar services based on TRIP's experience. Community Connections, like TRIP, started small and then grew continuously as a result of the enthusiastic satisfaction for the program by riders, volunteer drivers, funders, the health community, and government agencies.

# Volunteer Driver Service Successful in Rural County Ravaged by Wildfires

**People who do not drive or use public transportation  
are now able to reliably access medical care when needed**

Rural and isolated residents of Lake County California have been able to meet difficult transportation needs because of the Lake Links' Pay-Your-Pal Program, started in 2015 by the Lake County Consolidated Transportation Services Agency. The innovative program is meeting a critical need for access to medical care caused by extraordinary geographic and socio-economic factors.

Lake County's population of 64,000 lives in cities and towns surrounding the 68 square mile Clear Lake, which sits in a basin surrounded by mountains. These features present significant challenges for those needing transportation services. Healthcare and other essential services are often found on the other side of the lake from where people live, or over the mountains in more populous neighboring counties.



Travel from Lakeport on the west shore of the lake to services in the city of Clearlake takes about 50 minutes, and travel from Clearlake to medical providers in Santa Rosa, to which many Lake County residents are referred, takes about 1.5 hours by car, and 3.5 hours by bus. In addition to geographical challenges, transportation for county residents has been sometimes disrupted because five major wild fires hit the area, burning sixty-six percent of the county land in the last six years.

Federal transit law requires that projects selected for funding under the Enhanced Mobility for Individuals and

Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. The 2014-2015 Coordinated Plan for Lake County, completed with the assistance of AMMA Transit Planning consultants, specified that a critical top priority need for Lake County was the development of non-emergency medical transportation.

In 2015, with assistance from the Independent Living Partnership's TRIP Program, Lake County launched its own Pay-Your-Pal volunteer driver mileage reimbursement service. Almost immediately public transportation services in the county were confronted with the challenge of helping residents impacted by the massive Valley Fire that burned 76,067 acres, killed four people and destroyed nearly 2,000 buildings.

The Pay-Your-Pal Program started in 2015 has been successful getting elderly, disabled, low income people, who are not able to utilize regular Lake Transit bus services, to non-emergency medical appointments. Pay-Your-Pal has been the flexible and low cost solution that was needed.

Pay-Your-Pal has now supported 6,000 escorted trips and more than 126,000 miles of transportation free to Lake County residents who would not have otherwise been able get to sustain and supportive resources. The average cost to Pay-Your-Pal of each trip provided has been only \$7.09, a fraction of the cost of taxi service or demand-response bus service. Another plus of the program is the fact that clients select their own drivers and arrange their own trips, which sharply decreases overhead administrative costs.

## **Southeast Michigan Solves Access to Care, Isolation and Mental Health Challenge with Volunteer Driver Service**

### **Research beginning in 2003 culminated in 2008 nonprofit Freedom Road Transportation start-up**

Led by what is now the Oakland Community Health Network, a group of involved citizens, representatives from a variety of human service agencies and community stakeholders formed a work group to explore options to provide transportation specifically for those living with a low income who did not have access to public transportation.

A focused 2003 study found uneven public transportation availability in the communities north of Detroit. Service gaps resulted because independent communities could opt out of the public SMART (Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation) bus service and busses were not able to cross county and city boundaries.

Many people in Southeast Michigan were unable to access care or basic needs and were socially isolated because of the transportation challenges. Because isolation precedes the onset of depression community mental health agencies work to alleviate isolation. Following findings that there was a transportation problem for mental health clients, the group of volunteers began researching effective and economical ways to supplement SMART services for area residents who were unable to use existing transit options.

The process to develop the needed transportation service was deliberate and methodical. Research continued for four additional years after Freedom Road incorporated as a nonprofit in 2008. For the next four years Freedom Road monitored several different programs and their quality and effectiveness. The group looked at obtaining vans, hiring drivers and all that was thought to go with a transportation system. The group found the TRIP model in California to be the most unique, efficient and economical program. TRIP does not hire drivers or use vans but pays mileage reimbursement incentives for volunteer drivers.

Freedom Road decided to implement a TRIP-base program because its service design allowed for one hundred percent use of donations to support riders with little overhead and administration cost. With the help of Grant Funding from Oakland Community Health Network and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Freedom Road was able to start a volunteer driver mileage reimbursement service and provide a transportation option in Oakland County. Freedom Road Transportation's first riders began to apply for needed service in 2012.

The continuing service has been funded by matches from SMART, Federal grants, donations and partnerships with other organizations, hospitals and churches. A "Partner Program" modification to the basic TRIP model maintains a small pool of volunteer drivers who transport partner clients to and from appointments for an agreed upon service fee.

Originally serving people in Oakland County, Freedom Road now also serves people in Macomb, Wayne and Monroe Counties. Ridership and support from other organizations is growing and Freedom Road is now looking for additional funding to expand more.

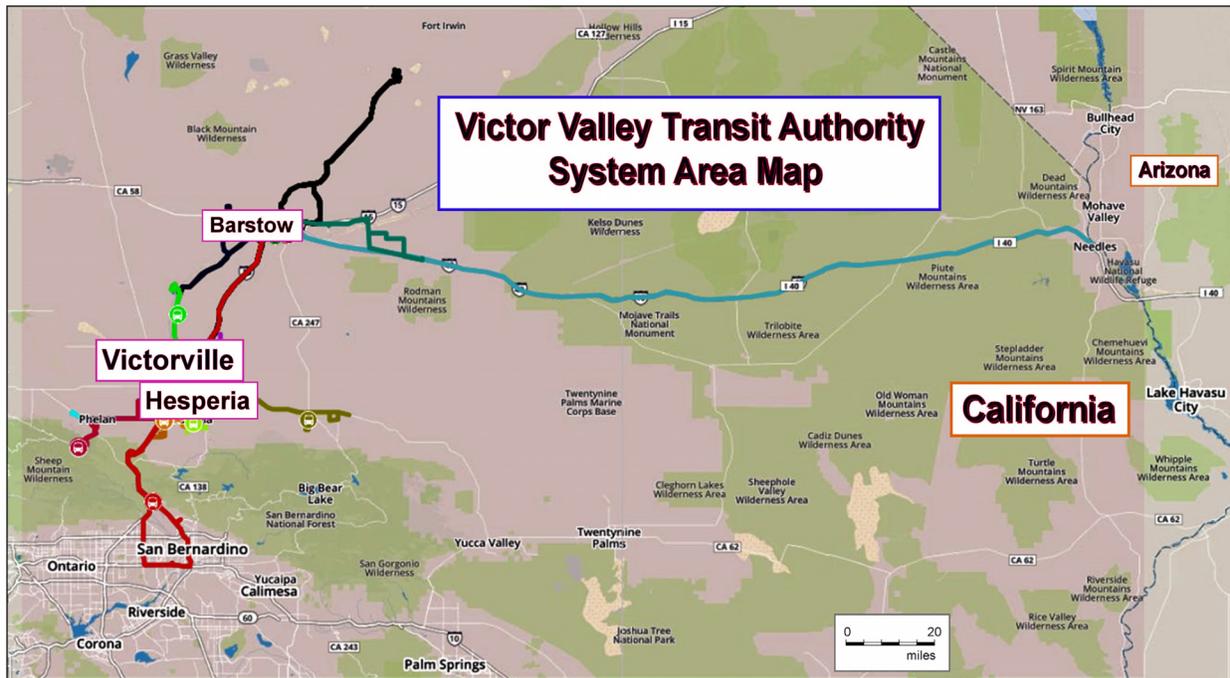
## **Rural Transit Authority Has Expanded Service to Include Volunteer Driver Program**

**TRIP program has proven to be extraordinarily beneficial to passengers and their overall quality of life**

Victor Valley Transit Authority (VVTA) implemented a volunteer driver reimbursement program to be able to provide transportation service to disabled individuals and seniors who are not able to utilize traditional public transportation services.

VVTA operates 96 vehicles serving a population of 350,471 in desert and mountain communities in San Bernardino County California. Population density for much of the area is estimated to be fewer than 8 persons per acre. VVTA's volunteer driver program is available for people spread over a huge area of more than 900 square miles.

Some people have a condition or disability that precludes them from utilizing traditional bus and demand-response transportation services, or their residence lies outside the boundaries of VVTA's fixed route and complementary paratransit service area. The Victor Valley Transit Authority's TRIP volunteer driver service enables VVTA to make transportation more accessible to the most vulnerable members of the community, with the goal of improving their overall quality of life.



The VVTA-TRIP volunteer driver reimbursement program has been extraordinarily successful. Ninety persons are currently enrolled in the program and the service has resulted in 28,462 trips that would not otherwise have been completed. Volunteer drivers have provided 689,346 miles of escorted travel since the service started in 2013. The average 1-way trip length was 26 miles, with the longest trips provided being more than 100 miles each way.

VVTA's TRIP volunteer driver mileage reimbursement service is available to people who live in San Bernardino County's rural, desert and mountain communities who are disabled, frail, unable to drive, and are unable to effectively use VVTA's other services. The TRIP program, complementing VVTA's public transportation services, has allowed them an additional mobility option for individuals currently using paratransit service but who might be better served by a program that allows them a direct trip to vital appointments.

Qualified riders recruit volunteer drivers from friends and neighbors, arrange for needed trips and a mileage reimbursement incentive is paid for the volunteer drivers by VVTA through direct deposit or deposit to "SOLE Pay Card". The VVTA-TRIP service is funded by Federal grants.

The TRIP Administrator says that the program has made needed transportation available for many people who live in areas where transportation is extremely limited. For example, TRIP helps clients see specialists or receive treatment in the San Bernardino Valley or in Los Angeles, outside the VVTA service area. Another client, who is 92, needs to go Las Vegas from his home in Needles for medical services, a distance of over 100 miles, and TRIP gets him to his appointments in our neighboring state.

She says they have many appreciative clients who are seeing their health improve by being able to get to much needed medical attention, getting better nutrition by being able to get to the local food banks in their areas and just being able to go to a grocery store.

VVTA-TRIP riders are also able to get to mental health care that might be neglected if they were not able pay someone to provide the transportation. She concludes that TRIP is a great program serving the underserved in the communities served by VVTA. The TRIP program has enabled customers to better integrate into their community and participate in more meaningful ways than had previously been possible.

More to come.....

Manual last updated 11/9/2018