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Volunteer Driver Service Can Help Lower Transit Costs

Time-tested model can replace expensive premium ADA Paratransit rides

RIVERSIDE, Calif., October 22, 2019 – Transit agencies across the country can benefit from adding an inexpensive TRIP volunteer driver program, according to Richard Smith, CEO, Independent Living Partnership. Smith says, “During the last year the TRIP volunteer driver service in Riverside County provided 138,000 one-way trips for sick, disabled and elderly riders at a low, per trip cost of \$5.68.”

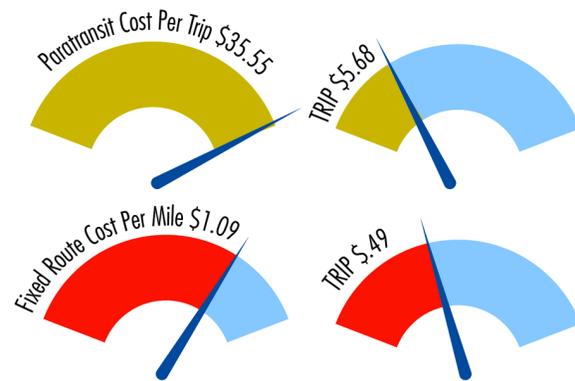
The 2015 National Transit Database reported a cost of \$35.55 per one-way trip by paratransit service. The TRIP volunteer driver service cost per trip was more than 6 times LESS than the average national cost of a one-way Paratransit trip. The cost per passenger mile with TRIP last year was 45% of the National Database cost per passenger mile provided on a regular bus.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public transit agencies that operate bus service to provide “complementary paratransit” service to people with disabilities who cannot use the fixed-route service due to a disability.

Under U.S. Department of Transportation regulations persons eligible for Paratransit services must be treated equitably without regard for the purposes of their travel. Providing trips that are “out of area” and dialysis trips are extraordinary in terms of the strain they place on the system.

The 2019 *Dialysis Transportation: Intersection of Transportation and Healthcare* report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine found that “Demand for trips for dialysis is impacting transit agencies’ ability to meet other trip needs.” The research concludes that the extra time and effort required for dialysis trips translate to higher per trip costs and that public transportation is not appropriate for dialysis trips requiring more care than public transportation is designed to provide.

Smith suggests that giving ADA Paratransit eligible people the option of using a TRIP model volunteer driver service instead could decrease the strain on transit services and save transit agencies the growing cost of Paratransit expense. He continues that the service type, which the



- Average paratransit cost per trip reported in the 2015 National Standard Transportation Database was \$35.55; TRIP actual per trip cost in 2019 was \$5.68.
- In 2015 the national average cost per passenger mile on a regular bus was \$1.09; the 2019 calculated cost per passenger mile by TRIP was \$0.49.

Independent Living Partnership has proven to be viable and cost-effective for more than 25 years, could be adopted and operated by transit agencies everywhere, individually owned and branded as an innovative “Mobility as a Service” offering of the agencies.

According to the ILPconnect.org website, a TRIP model volunteer driver service is easy to start and, using the TripTrak™ software that ILP developed, requires minimal staffing for administration. Smith says, “Because of TRIP’s innovative design, riders share responsibility for their own transportation, recruiting their own volunteers and arranging their own rides.” He says, “Because the rider recruits their own driver and the volunteer driver is responsible for the vehicle and insurance, there is minimal liability for sponsoring agency.” Paying mileage reimbursement is the main cost of the service and friendship between the rider and the volunteer is the bond that perpetuates the rides.

About the nonprofit Independent Living Partnership

The Independent Living Partnership (ILP) is the creator of the award-winning and nationally acclaimed TRIP Model, an innovative, self-directed mileage reimbursement transportation service for specifically defined populations. ILP has operated the TRIP Program in Riverside County California since 1993, providing more than 30.6 million miles of volunteer transportation and 2.3 million needed one-way trips for thousands of sick, elderly and disabled individuals. ILP has assisted dozens of agencies and organizations across the country start and operate TRIP model programs over the years. For more information about ILP and the highly regarded TRIP program, please visit: <https://ilpconnect.org/>

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