

Volunteer Driver Program development, coordination and training:

Description of Task:

Our aim is to build upon the region's volunteer driver programs that are already functional and assist those that are developing; to promote public recognition for these programs enabling those who need them to utilize them with ease, abundantly, affordably, filling the gaps.

The Question of hiring a Recruiter:

Staff a volunteer driver recruiter that will assist all volunteer driver programs in EC MN. He/She will work for the ECRTCC under the ECRDC. This will be a full-time position held at the ECRDC office. He/She will also build a dispatch center that will utilize the full complement of volunteer driving programs in the region and outside the region where possible/necessary. *Hold off until next grant period. Work on capacity building, strengthen what's already working, build job description, understand how to coordinate with all public providers. What is the need? Who do they work for? Where would the volunteer drivers be placed? Triage to appropriate Volunteer driver agency. Work on inventory of providers. Brandon mentioned the issue of a regional recruiter. Drivers will want to do medical rides as these programs pay more. Volunteers will drive all over the state. They are not just driving in one area. Ask drivers about the program that they drive for, questionnaire – to find out what their opportunities are. Recruiter will help seniors with filling out forms, answer questions, create one on one relationships with the volunteers. He/She will help create the connections with the correct drivers for riders and visa-versa. Recruiter would support and retain volunteers. Bring to bigger group to ask them to assist with the framework. Planning in this go-round, what is the step in between? The hope is that soon the legislature will raise the rate for reimbursement.*

Directory/Inventory:

Working with the ECRTCC Director and TMCC Director, we will coordinate the list of current volunteer driver organizations in the region. At this point, we have found these organizations providing volunteer drivers:

Timber Trails Public Transit -	Rides paid thru MA. Private Pay – charge riders .60/mile loaded and unloaded
Arrowhead Public Transit -	MA only – <i>Medical only paid by Insurance or State – loaded and unloaded paid</i>
Tri-CAP -	MA only “ “
Heartland Express Public Transit -	MA only “ “
TRY Volunteer Driver Program -	no charge for rides, drive anywhere, no pay for drivers
RSVP Volunteer Driver - (RSVP must find host program)	no charge for rides, drive anywhere, drivers paid a stipend, drivers must be 55 and over. 100 mile maximum per month for mileage reimbursement.

RSVP does not recruit drivers. Members sign up to do particular volunteer work, if driving is something they wish to do, RSVP hooks the person up with (in our region) TRY.

RSVP working with 7 Co. Sr. Federation for drivers? And riders?

RSVP working with Lakes & Pines for riders?

Transportation resource, filling the details, general contact information.

Need to find the transportation gaps by utilizing mapping, assistance from public providers and other transportation programs.

Bank of Resources for Training:

Training resources for riders and drivers.

Who are the trainers, where are the facilities, webinars available.

RTAP (Rural Transit Assistance Program) is a resource for training those who are transportation disadvantaged in utilizing resources such as apps, internet, phone.

Volunteer Driver Form Collection:

Compiling all of the forms and keeping them current. These are the questions asked of the volunteers when they sign on with a volunteer driver program. Along with any other information needed by volunteer and program.

Assist TRY in building their program:

Apply for a grant on their behalf in order to give them the opportunity for autonomy. This will propel them forward as a 501c3. It will make them a stand-alone entity and capable of filing for their own grants and funding. We can also assist them with attaining grants. Would they consider enlarging their reach?

MCOTA Discussion of Volunteer Driver Brochure "Getting There Safely" is on hold. There is not a confirmed hearing yet, but that they are hoping from one in transportation. Commerce and tax are not settled. This brochure's information will help alleviate issues with insurance companies, assuring the differentiation of a Volunteer Driver and a Driver for Hire.

MCOTA involvement:

The Fall Forum in 2018 had almost 200 people. A forum needs to happen again in 2020 regardless of legislation issues. *The 2020 forum will happen on the third week of November. It will be virtual. 2 days. Policy and Practice. Karen and Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver (Arrowhead) are compiling the agenda with assistance from MCOTA, MPTA, and many other agencies.*

MCOTA "Getting There Safely" Brochure:

This is on hold, issues in verbiage with Commerce Department.

Volunteer Driver Coalition:

Composition (list on back of Call to Action).

Website: volunteerdrivermn.org

Continue full support of and action with the coalition.

A major push back is coming from multiple sources. *The pandemic has pushed this to it not being a current priority*, this is not a funding year, the time schedule is very tight, and it also has to go through 3 different committees (transportation, commerce, tax.) *Federal Reimbursement Issue is coming to the fore. Volunteer Driver rates may possibly be adjusted to coincide with the federal reimbursement rate. The CTA (Community Transportation Association of America) is coming forward to make this possible.* https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2020_Legislative_Priorities.pdf

Scholarship CDL training:

Discuss with regional Technical schools about scholarship opportunities, training for cost or payment through volunteering in exchange for credit to pay for courses.

Live Well at Home grants:

These are operational and also capital grants. DHS Live Well website. Another round is due on or around May 15th. Serves older adults 60plus. Transportation is a huge priority and isolation is a terrible issue for the elderly. The grant serves non-profits. It can help with the cost of transportation and in the development of a volunteer driver program. Possibly instead of the Initiative Foundation for TRY? Ben has much information for the St. Cloud area's utilization of these grants.

How do we find volunteer drivers?

Chambers of Commerce – Talk to Businesses.

Look for Businesses that must do community hours like LOWES

Discuss with Lions Club and other Civic-Minded Clubs

Maybe not go to Priests/Ministers as we discussed before, instead go to the Quilting Club, or other church groups to discuss the ideas of church members helping church members (needs of the community). Need to have volunteer drivers who **are not** almost ready for volunteer rides!

No one to move into the sect. Is Volunteer Driving a sustaining model?
How can we make it sustainable? Lions are a dying breed. ... Businesses may be the answer.

Facebook Page:

Ashley is working hard on this. It's been seen by 6700 and 900 people engaging with us. The point is to keep people informed about what is available and occurring in our region. She has been in touch with an Uber/Lyft driver who is interested in speaking with us.

Further conversation:

One Call/One Click – RTCC in West Central MN may be on the close road to attaining this. Courtney Whited may have more information.

We are compiling the information and as we feel that it's sufficient, possibly ask another entity to provide the dispatch OR we could be the hub of the information, and utilize a program that will allow those who reach the website to click on links that will assist them in getting them where they need to go. Filters that will establish route, needs, times, etc.

Extra Notes:

MnDOT transportation expansion opportunities are 2 years out.

Volunteer Driver Issue/Panel/Forum?

Possibly be held at Pine County courthouse.

Bring Tina Smith into the conversation of Volunteer Driving issues.

Live Well at Home grants (next grant deadline is now mid-July) could be utilized for Volunteer Driver Promotion, Rider training and Driver training.

Coordination of current volunteer driver programs:

Professional drivers who work with the TMCC for extenuating situations – paid thru. Insurance, Health systems, MnDOT

Volunteer Driver programs need Businesses to participate.

What is the need?

Healthy Communities, Socialization, Isolation prevention, Access to needed healthcare

Bring Business to Businesses

Good will

Chambers of Commerce

Business Involvement

Community Organizations

Lions

JayCeers

Senior Federation – survey members to see if they would drive/need rides

Most volunteer drivers are working under bigger programs that pay at the federal rate. As you know, what often is the case is that these rates are passed down to the drivers after Medical Insurance pays the bigger organization – only allowing drivers to drive NEMT (Non-Emergency Medical Transportation). Here is a case for another problem – we don't have volunteer drivers that can drive for other reasons (grocery, pharmacy, etc.). RSVP has the capability to transport people/supplies/food but they pay less than the federal rate and drivers must be 55 or older. What is the incentive for the volunteer driver to work with RSVP if another organization can pay them more?