

Getting Your Volunteer Driver Program Started



IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN HELPING YOUR COMMUNITY DEVELOP A VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAM, PLEASE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS AS A GUIDE TOWARDS YOUR NEW PROGRAM.

1 Define the area and population you are going to serve.




DEFINE YOUR SERVICE AREA. IS IT A SPECIFIC TOWN OR GROUP OF TOWNS?

- **Determine the boundaries of how far you will drive.**
 - For example, will future drivers provide rides within your community, within a 25 mile radius, or further? Will you allow drivers to cross state lines, such as the medical centers in Boston?
- **Identify the population you are going to serve.**
 - Will your VDP provide rides to specific groups such as seniors and individuals with disabilities, or will you provide rides to any resident within the community that needs a ride?
- **Identify other rider restrictions.**
 - Will riders need to fall within an income bracket in order to qualify for a ride? What if riders have mobility issues, can they be accommodated?



2 Define the allowed trip purpose (if any) and limitations to scheduling.

What types of trips will you provide? Will rides be provided for:

-  **Medical Appts.**
-  **Socializing**
-  **Food**
-  **Recreation**
-  **Pharmacy**
-  **Errands**

or anything else?

What days of the week and hours will drivers be providing rides?



Can drivers pickup rides on any date or time they want?



What days of the week and hours will the VDP take calls?



3 Identify existing resources.

TO CREATE A VDP, IT OFTEN HELPS TO LEARN ABOUT THE EXISTING RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND ABOUT ANY VDP WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY'S AREA. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:



KeepNHMoving - <https://keepnhmoving.com/>

This website provides an assortment of information on transportation services, mobility managers, and other resources.



Regional Mobility Managers - <https://keepnhmoving.com/region/>

There are eight mobility managers in New Hampshire ready to assist those who inquire in finding the best transportation services in their community.



Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) - <https://www.nharpc.org/>

There are nine RPCs in the state and each provides land use and transportation planning and outreach services.



Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) - <https://keepnhmoving.com/region/>

The RCCs' mission is to facilitate the implementation of coordinated community transportation and encourage the development of improved and expanded regional community transportation services.



VDPs in NH - <https://nhaha.info/volunteer-driver-initiative/#info>

The Alliance for Healthy Aging (AHA) Transportation Committee has a very helpful website that provides information for those wanting to learn about becoming a volunteer driver as well as a map that highlights VDPs across NH.



Community and Municipal Websites

Community websites often showcase community transportation services that are available. Check out your local town or city's website and search for transportation services that are available.

4 Identify potential partners

OTHER TOWN DEPTS., LOCAL NON-PROFITS, RELIGIOUS ORGS., OR OTHERS MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN COORDINATING RIDES FOR THEIR PATRONS.

- **Develop relationships** with town organizations and/or representatives that are involved with older or disabled adults including local libraries, parks and recreation departments, and emergency management staff.
- **Identify common goals/needs** in developing a VDP.
- **Identify possible resources** such as a vehicle, website, programming, funding, or other resources.

5 Demonstrate the need for a VDP.

DO YOU HAVE RIDERS? DO YOU HAVE DRIVERS?

- **Riders:** It is very important to quantify the need for a VDP. Can you demonstrate a need for a VDP? Have you surveyed residents? Your local Regional Planning Commission may be able to assist with developing and conducting a local survey to help understand the need.
- **Drivers:** Depending on the demonstrated need, you will want to recruit drivers. Again, the Alliance for Healthy Aging (AHA) Transportation Committee has a very helpful website that provides information for those wanting to learn about becoming a volunteer driver as well as a map that highlights VDPs across NH. <https://nhaha.info/volunteer-driver-initiative/#info>

Examples of volunteer driver recruitment venues include:

- The faith community
- Retirees and retiree groups
- Community service and civic groups
- Education programs and institutions
- Community events
- Senior and community services
- Neighborhood and information center
- Chambers of commerce
- Job boards at senior centers and colleges.
- Social media.
- Direct mail to residents and newsletters.
- Posters and flyers at the local general store.



6 Develop an administrative support plan.

Will you be starting on your own VDP, coordinating with an existing agency, town department, or something else? You need a plan to designate a central person or department or agency who will coordinate riders and drivers. You will also need basic administrative functions such as a phone, computer, and possibly rider/driver software for scheduling purposes. Local municipal departments or other agencies that might host your VDP include:

- Police
- Parks and Recreation
- Welfare
- Local senior center.
- Non-profit organization.
- Local religious organization.



Scheduling Software: Many VDPs utilize ride-scheduling software. Some VDP's start out using free services, such as spreadsheets (Google Sheets) or Sign-Up Genius.

Outreach: How will a rider learn about your VDP? Many VDPs utilize:

- Websites/social media
 - Community events
 - Local newspapers and newsletters
 - Flyers and brochures
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7 Funding resources.

There are a variety of funding resources available and depending if you partner with an existing town department or agency, your funding needs may vary. Examples of funding sources include:

- Municipal support.
 - [Municipal Vehicle Registration Fee:](https://www.allenstownnh.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf241/f/agenda/agenda-file/a%20look%20at%20the%20municipal%20vehicle%20registration%20fee%20vital%20communities.pdf)
<https://www.allenstownnh.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf241/f/agenda/agenda-file/a look at the municipal vehicle registration fee vital communities.pdf>
 - Donations/Fundraising
 - Support from nonprofit organizations.
 - [Endowment for Health.](#)
 - [Granite United Way.](#)
 - [NH Charitable Foundation.](#)
 - Federal Funding (recommended for large-scale providers) usually requires accessible transportation to be provided and the administrative support to conduct an audit. Two possible federal funding sources include:
 - [Older Americans Act Title III Part B Programs](#)
 - [Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program](#)
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8 Background checks and insurance.

VDPs usually require volunteers to pass an online criminal background and DMV records check. The cost for a criminal background check is [\\$25.00](#), and [\\$15.00](#) for a DMV records check. Volunteer should have their own automobile insurance coverage. It is good practice for organizations to have their volunteers' auto insurance card and driver's license on file. The State of NH prohibits insurance companies from raising driver rates, because they volunteer to drive. VDPs should also have an umbrella insurance policy that covers volunteers in the event the claim is not covered by the driver's personal auto insurance.