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# **HOW TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN DOOR-THROUGH-DOOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR SENIORS**

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## DISCLAIMER

This How-to Guide was prepared by Westat and its subcontractor, the Beverly Foundation, for the Administration on Aging, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The opinions and conclusions presented in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Administration on Aging or any other agency. Information contained in this Guide is intended as general guidelines rather than as specific advice regarding the operations of door-through-door transportation services in particular communities. All operations should be closely tailored to individual community needs, resources, and regulations.



***“We provide the trips that feed the seniors’ spirits.”***

***Kaunoa Senior Services***

***Door-through-door transportation “. . . provides more freedom and independence for persons who use these services (and their caregivers).”***

***Ride Connection***

***Door-through-door transportation “. . . allows people to age in place. It ensures that we don’t let people down. It means that they can depend on us in the long haul.”***

***West Austin Caregivers***



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# HOW TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN DOOR-THROUGH-DOOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR SENIORS

**Door-through-door transportation offers a very high level of service for seniors who have significant mobility limitations.** This How-to Guide describes how to make such services work in your community. Using information from case studies of existing door-through-door services for seniors, this Guide provides you with

- ✦ background information,
- ✦ models and case studies of different door-through-door services,
- ✦ key decisions you will need to make to start and sustain door-through-door transportation services in your community,
- ✦ frequently asked questions, and
- ✦ resources for further information.

Door-through-door transportation services offer personal, hands-on assistance for persons who have difficulties getting in and out of vehicles and buildings, thus opening doors to a wider range of opportunities and experiences.

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## INTRODUCTION

Basic knowledge needed to understand door-through-door transportation services includes the following information:

- ✦ Most seniors have sufficient health and other resources to independently fulfill all their transportation needs.
- ✦ **Some seniors (often the eldest) are so frail or infirm that they need personal, hands-on assistance in making a trip.**
- ✦ Persons with such needs **often could not make that trip without personal, intensive support** because their physical or mental limitations make them unable to access or use other public or specialized transportation services.

“Assisted transportation” is a formal service designation for AoA-funded programs. It is defined as follows: “Provision of assistance, including escort, to a person who has difficulties (physical or cognitive) using regular vehicular transportation.”

Door-through-door transportation “. . . allows people to age in place. It ensures that we don’t let people down. It means that they can depend on us in the long haul.”

*West Austin Caregivers*

- ✦ Seniors may receive help entering or exiting their homes, the destinations of their trips, or the vehicles used for their trips. Some seniors with serious frailties or disabilities may also require personal assistance while traveling on vehicles.

Such travel assistance is often called “door-through-door transportation;” it is also sometimes known as “assisted transportation,” “supported (or supportive) transportation,” or “escorted transportation.” This type of assistance is not commonly available on public transit systems and is often not offered by taxi operators.

**Door-through-door transportation services respond to special personal needs.** These services support the mission of the Administration on Aging (AoA) to promote the dignity and independence of older people by providing the mobility needed to help frail and infirm seniors continue to live independently in their own homes. Independent living is by far the most cost-effective solution for seniors, their families, the aging network, and the country as a whole: comments from providers across the country indicate that many older persons served by door-through-door transportation would require assisted living or nursing home services if they did not have personal assistance with their transportation. The vast majority of seniors also prefer to stay in their own homes. These services provide more freedom and independence for seniors who use them and lessen the burden for their caregivers as well.

**The mobility provided through door-through-door transportation is thus a key component of independent living:** consumers who are living in the community but have serious mobility limitations need door-through-door services to fulfill their basic mobility needs. Members of the aging and human service networks who provide door-through-door transportation — including organizations such as interfaith groups, senior centers, Area Agencies on Aging, human service agencies, hospitals, and volunteers programs — are offering services not commonly available through other agencies. Door-through-door transportation services will become even more important in the future as the number of “old-old” persons (85 and older) — many of whom have serious mobility limitations — increases dramatically.

**The growth of the senior population in the United States is one of the most significant trends affecting our country.** Comparing U. S. populations in 2000 and 2030, Census Bureau projections indicate that, by 2030, there may be twice as many persons 65 years and older

as there were in 2000 and almost 2.5 times as many 85 and older. Americans are generally living longer and are healthier than in past generations. But research shows that, **for most Americans, life expectancy now exceeds driving expectancy by 7 to 10 years**, meaning that many former drivers will need to find new means of travel. Also, population projections indicate that, compared to today there may be greater numbers of older persons in the future who have health, mobility, or income limitations. These persons will face special challenges to independent living. **Such trends will make services like door-through-door transportation even more important to seniors in the future.**

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## ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF DOOR-THROUGH-DOOR SERVICES

Case study data show that door-through-door transportation may require considerable personal hands-on assistance through several doors. For example, round trip transportation may require help

- ✦ Out of the door at a senior's home,
- ✦ Into a vehicle and out again, and
- ✦ Through the door at the destination.

For the trip back to a person's home, this sequence of doors is reversed.

Certainly, not all seniors need personal assistance through one or all the doors. However, seniors who do need such help depend strongly on transportation programs that can provide door-through-door service, often as a last resort in meeting their travel needs.

While "opening doors" is certainly a key feature of door-through-door transportation, **it is the personal, hands-on support for riders that distinguishes this service from other transportation programs.**

The "door-through-door realm" includes several possible steps or levels of assistance. On a continuum of increasing levels of assistance, each of which usually includes the previous steps, they can be called:

- ✦ **Gentle support:** Opening doors and providing verbal guidance.

Personal, hands-on assistance is the essence of door-through-door transportation services.

- ✦ **Physical support:** Providing physical support for the rider to assist with balance, assist in climbing steps, or performing similar functions. This support may include delivering the rider to an attendant at the destination who then takes over the task of personal support and assistance. This “handoff” function is sometimes called “hand-to-hand” or “chair-to-chair” service.
- ✦ **Activity support:** The driver or escort stays with the rider and helps with the activity at the destination. For example, the driver or escort may assist the rider inside a grocery store, help the rider understand a doctor’s instructions or diagnosis, or serve as an advocate for the rider’s travel needs.
- ✦ **Personal support:** The driver or escort may help the rider put on coats, shoes, or boots and help by putting away groceries in the rider’s home. Some drivers or escorts are or become friends of the rider and offer emotional or other personal support.

Many door-through-door transportation programs provide some, but not all, of these levels of assistance, but any one program may provide a variety of services: some seniors may need different levels of assistance on different days or for different destinations. For those who require even greater levels of care and assistance, more intensive services are generally provided by homemakers, home health aides, or chore services, rather than door-through-door transportation services. More intensive care could include dressing or lifting the senior or providing assistance in other activities of daily living.)

**It’s your choice:** there’s no one perfect way to provide door-through-door transportation. From the service choices described above, offer the services that best meet the needs of your riders and your community.

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## CASE STUDIES OF DOOR-THROUGH-DOOR SERVICES

In preparing this Guide, 22 case studies were conducted and 6 communities were selected for in-depth examinations. Appendix A has information on all 22 case studies. The six in-depth case studies of successful door-through-door transportation services are described below and in Table 1. All of these programs are successful, but their individual characteristics are quite different because

**Table 1:  
CHARACTERISTICS OF SIX  
DOOR-THROUGH-DOOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

<i>Program</i>	<i>Bedford Ride</i>	<i>Gadabout</i>	<i>Kaunoa Senior Services</i>	<i>Ride Connection</i>	<i>West Austin Caregivers</i>	<i>TRIP</i>
<i>Location</i>	Bedford, Virginia	Ithaca, New York	Paia, Hawaii	Portland, Oregon	West Austin, Texas	Riverside, California
<i>Trip types</i>	Medical, grocery	Medical, grocery, nutrition, work, volunteering	All kinds of trips	All kinds of trips	All kinds of trips	All kinds of trips
<i>Hours</i>	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., M - F	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., M - F	7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., M - F	8 a.m. - 5 p.m., M - F	Daily from 9 a.m. to night and Sat. and Sun.	24 / 7 / 365
<i>Assistance</i>	Hands-on, coats, but no lifting riders	As needed, but heavy lifting is discouraged	As needed, but heavy lifting is discouraged	As needed, but no "personal assistance"	All kinds of help as requested by the rider	As needed
<i>Into the home?</i>	If necessary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Into destinations?</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Whose vehicles?</i>	Program's	Program's	Program's and driver's	Program's and driver's	Driver's	Driver's
<i>Insurance</i>	Program's	Program's	Program's (county is self-insured)	Program offers supplemental insurance	Program offers supplemental insurance	Driver's
<i>Paid or volunteer drivers?</i>	Volunteer	Both	Both, but primarily paid	Both	Volunteer	Volunteer

their characteristics are **closely tailored to specific community needs, resources, and regulations.**

- ✦ **Bedford Ride** provides medical and grocery shopping trips, many of which cover long distances, in a rural county in central Virginia. Bedford County covers 750 square miles and is home to 69,000 persons. Bedford Ride receives substantial in-kind support and services from Central Virginia Area Agency on Aging. Nearly everyone associated with this program is a volunteer. About 90 percent of the trips on this system are made in system-owned vehicles.
- ✦ **Gadabout Transportation Services, Inc.** in Ithaca, New York offers door-through-door transportation services and over 60,000 trips a year to seniors 60 years or older and to disabled older adults in both urban and rural areas in Tompkins County, New York, which has a population of 101,000 and includes 476 square miles. The program contracts with social services departments to provide escorts for riders. Using a combination of paid and volunteer drivers and escorts, Gadabout is proud of its community service spirit.
- ✦ **Kaunoa Senior Services** offers a 24-year-old transportation program on Maui County's three islands by both paid and volunteer drivers. The service area covers 728 square miles and includes 118,000 residents. The program is run by the Maui County Office on Aging and paid staff members (office workers and drivers) are county employees. Kaunoa Senior Services emphasizes a core set of values and a mission to provide personal treatment and timely services to their riders.
- ✦ **Ride Connection** in Portland, Oregon, is a nonprofit community organization that coordinates community agencies that provide rides for persons with disabilities and senior citizens without alternative transportation. Their service area includes 1.5 million persons in 3,000 square miles in three counties in Oregon and part of one county in Washington. They describe their mission as "linking accessible, responsive transportation with community need." Operating in close collaboration with Tri-Met, the local public transit authority, Ride Connection has helped Tri-Met trim its ADA paratransit costs. Ride Connection currently has 401 volunteers and 268 paid drivers.
- ✦ **TRIP (Transportation Reimbursement and Information Program)** in Riverside, California, targets frail seniors and people with disabilities who have no other form of transportation available and who would be homebound and

unable to provide for their daily needs if they did not have TRIP. The service area is Riverside County, which has a population of 1.7 million persons in 7,200 square miles. Most of the riders find their own drivers and schedule their trips with the driver. Many drivers also act as escorts and even assist riders with activities of daily living. TRIP reimburses the drivers on a mileage basis.

- ✦ **West Austin Caregivers** serves the western portion of Travis County, Texas. This 20-year-old transportation program was initially planned in 1984 when the Austin Metropolitan Ministries identified a need for support care for older congregants. West Austin Caregivers is a member of Partners in Caregiving, which includes eight interfaith caregiver programs that provide transportation to seniors throughout the Greater Austin Area. They provide rides to persons 60 and older; attendants or escorts may stay with the person at the destination.

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## HOW TO GET STARTED AND KEEP GOING

Get started, and keep the wheels rolling. Here are the key steps, developed through examining the case studies of existing door-through-door services in different communities:

- ✦ Choose the most appropriate services for your community.
- ✦ Work closely with important partners.
- ✦ Sustain the services by learning from the best practices of successful operations.

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### *Choose the Most Appropriate Services for Your Community*

It's up to you to decide how best to provide transportation services for your community. **Here are eight key choices** you need to make about door-through-door transportation services:

**What kinds of trips?** Which destinations will your program serve? A few agencies serve only “life-supporting” or “necessary trips,” like medical services and grocery shopping, while others take riders to other “life-enriching destinations,” such as senior or recreation centers,

nursing homes, and shopping malls. For example, Bedford Ride offers only “life supporting” trips to non-emergency medical care and shopping, while the other sites offer transportation for any purpose.

Your eight key choices:

- What kinds of trips?
- Which hours?
- What level of assistance?
- Into homes?  
And into destinations?
- Whose vehicles?
- Escorts?
- Whose insurance?
- Paid and/or volunteer drivers?

**Which hours?** Another big decision will be “regular business hours” versus “extended hours of service.” Regular business hours may be easier to administer, but many seniors want to be part of activities that occur at night, on weekends, or on holidays. What hours of service will your community support, in terms of both personnel and funding? For example, Gadabout offers transportation during regular business hours while West Austin Caregivers offers transportation during the daytime, evenings and weekends.

**What level of assistance?** What kinds of assistance will riders expect from your services? Will drivers or escorts help riders with their coats and boots? With groceries? With instructions from doctors or other medical personnel? Will drivers or escorts assist in transferring riders from their wheelchairs into vehicles? Most programs say they provide assistance as needed, but also say that they discourage heavy lifting. For example, TRIP’s drivers provide many different kinds of assistance, but most other programs specifically discourage personal assistance that involves heavy lifting.

**Into the home? And into destinations?** A big question for many door-through-door services: Will the drivers or escorts go into the homes of the riders to help the riders out of the doors of their homes? Will the drivers or escorts go into destinations (such as doctors’ offices and grocery stores), or are the riders left at the doorway? Each of the illustrative programs allows the drivers to go into the homes of the riders, but many programs limit the destinations that their drivers enter with the rider.

NOTE: Drivers for many public and paratransit services are often taught to never leave their vehicle and passengers for safety reasons. This means that few public transit systems will offer door-through-door services unless escorts are available to assist passengers with special needs.

**Whose vehicles?** Will the program own the vehicles that are being used to provide the trips? Alternatively, will volunteers drive their own cars? Both situations are used extensively, and some programs use both volunteer- and program-owned vehicles. Kaunoa Senior Services uses both program- and driver-owned vehicles, Bedford Ride and Gadabout provide program-owned vehicles and, in the West



Austin Caregivers and TRIP programs, only vehicles owned by the volunteer drivers are used.

**Will We Have Escorts?** Will the program provide volunteer or paid escorts to provide hands-on assistance through various doors? TRIP relies on drivers to also function as escorts, Ride Connection has a special “concierge” program through which an escort rides along with the driver, West Austin sometimes assigns escorts to assist drivers, and Bedford Ride asks family members to serve as escorts when higher levels of assistance are needed.

**Whose insurance?** Will the program provide insurance or supplemental insurance for drivers and escorts? Or will the volunteers be expected to assume the risks of offering trips through their drivers’ or homeowners’ insurance policies? When a program (such as Bedford Ride or Gadabout) uses its own vehicles, insurance is provided by the transportation program. Alternately, when a volunteer uses his or her own vehicle (as in the West Austin and TRIP programs), the vehicle insurance of the volunteer driver is primary, and the program’s insurance is secondary. Kaunoa Senior Services uses both county-owned vehicles and the vehicles of volunteer drivers and provides the primary insurance for its vehicles and secondary insurance for volunteer driver vehicles. Ride Connection includes a rider on its insurance policy to cover the vehicles of its volunteer vehicles, although its insurance is still primary.

Insurance can be a big concern. See the Frequently Asked Questions section for further information.

**Paid and/or volunteer drivers?** A number of door-through-door transportation services use both paid and volunteer drivers because a mix of driver types can provide the greatest flexibility at the lowest cost. Volunteer drivers are attractive because, by definition, they are not being paid an hourly wage, and each of the trips needed by seniors receiving door-through-door services typically takes several hours or more. On the other hand, for certain times of the day or for certain tasks, services may be better provided by paid drivers. The three largest programs studied — Gadabout, Kaunoa Senior Services, and Ride Connection — use both paid and volunteer drivers. Bedford Ride, West Austin, and TRIP, the three smaller programs, use volunteer drivers exclusively.

These cases strongly demonstrate that the most appropriate service for one community may be very different from the most appropriate service in another. Different programs answer the eight questions above in ways that are as varied as the communities they serve, demonstrating that **it’s possible to design successful door-through-**

**door transportation services that are highly attuned to local concerns, conditions, and resources.** No one model of door-through-door services works in all communities or all situations — many successful variations exist.

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### *Work Closely with Important Partners*

The second key to success is to work closely with important partners. Managers of existing door-through-door services recommend keeping in close contact with the following organizations and agencies:

- ✦ **Your Local Area Agency on Aging:** The local AAA is your key source of information about seniors and the community programs that support their needs. Title III funds are administered by Area Agencies on Aging; they can directly support door-through-door transportation under the title of “assisted transportation services.” Area Agencies are often important sponsors of door-through-door services, and certain AAA-funded programs (such as senior centers and nutrition sites) may be frequent destinations of door-through-door services.
- ✦ **Local Private Community-Based Organizations and Foundations:** Faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations, the United Way, and other agencies can be great sources of volunteers, funding, and supplies and equipment. AARP, the Red Cross, RSVP, and other programs may also assist in finding volunteers. Working closely with such agencies helps establish the legitimacy of door-through-door services. Private nonprofit organizations may be able to tap funding sources (donations, foundations, and others) that are not available to public agencies.
- ✦ **Other Local Human Service Agencies:** Other human service agencies may have resources to share that could provide a coordinated approach to service delivery. They may be willing to offer contracts for door-through-door services for their clients. They may also know of individuals who need door-through-door services or who can serve as volunteers.
- ✦ **Local Government:** Local government offers community and financial supports that are key to success. Local government agencies can assist by distributing funding from state and Federal sources or by certifying eligibility for such sources.

- ✦ **Local Public Transit Agency:** While public transit agencies often provide large numbers of trips, they often have difficulty providing the kinds of hands-on assistance offered by door-through-door transportation services. For example, work and safety rules often prohibit public transit drivers from leaving their seat or their vehicle to assist individual riders. Transit agencies can assist in many other tasks, however, including driver training, vehicle procurement and maintenance, record keeping, and funding eligibility.
- ✦ **State Human Service and Transportation Agencies:** State agencies can be important sources of funding, equipment, and technical expertise. Close contact with these agencies is often vital to success.

Table 2 indicates key sources of funds and other support at the six case study sites.

**Table 2:  
KEY SOURCES OF SUPPORT  
AT THE CASE STUDY SITES**

<i>Sources of funding and other supports</i>	<i>Programs using this as a key source</i>
Area Agency on Aging	Bedford Ride, West Austin, TRIP
Community- and faith-based organizations	West Austin, Bedford Ride
Local human service agencies	Gadabout
Local government	Kaunoa, Bedford Ride
Local public transit agencies	Gadabout, Ride Connection, TRIP
State human service and transportation agencies	Gadabout, Ride Connection
Other sources	All programs

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## *Sustain the Services by Learning from the Best Practices of Successful Operations*

Directors of door-through-door transportation services for seniors offered key recommendations for sustaining such services once they have begun. Their recommendations included:

- ✦ Focus on individualized services;
- ✦ Build services that support the unique values and needs of the community;
- ✦ Obtain sufficient financial support;
- ✦ Focus on the riders to build strong consumer-oriented services;
- ✦ Recruit, hire, and train staff to be sensitive to consumer needs;
- ✦ Involve community leaders, enlist local sparkplugs;
- ✦ Focus on efficient services;
- ✦ Work with partners to ensure a comprehensive local service network for seniors and others in need; and
- ✦ Adapt to changes and challenges.

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### Focus on Individualized Services

“Helping those who have nowhere else to turn gives me great satisfaction.”

*A volunteer driver*

The fundamental element of door-through-door transportation services is a passion for responding to personal travel needs of individual seniors who face special travel challenges, and responding with patience and sensitivity. Both paid staff and the volunteers working for these programs appear to find their experiences extremely rewarding. Comments received from the six sites concerning what the service means to their agency and to the riders include the following:

- ✦ **Bedford Ride:** Riders get personal transportation and become friends with the drivers. Volunteers experience a sense of stewardship and a way to provide interfaith service. They feel they are giving something of value and are pleased with the recognition that they receive. The caregivers of the riders experience some relief from certain chores. Local governments recognize a consumer-oriented service that makes riders happy.
- ✦ **Gadabout Transportation Services:** Drivers and staff know that they are providing an important service. Riders report that

these services allow them to maintain their independence. They feel a personal connection with the drivers and volunteers who are their friends.

- ✦ **Kaunoa Senior Services:** Their mission is to “continuously create those special and exceptional experiences and opportunities which will make the retirement years of the elderly feel like the best years.” They report that they “provide trips that feed the seniors’ spirits.” Riders report that these services are extremely important to their quality of life.
- ✦ **Ride Connection:** Ride Connection’s stated vision is “to serve this frail population [older adults and persons with disabilities] with a more adaptable, accessible service than traditional mass transit allows.” These services provide more freedom and independence for those who use these services and for their caregivers as well.
- ✦ **TRIP:** Riders are able to stay in their own homes and enjoy their independence. They can be better connected with their community and can rebuild their support network. This is vital for those persons who have no other transportation options.
- ✦ **West Austin Caregivers:** “It allows people to age in place. It ensures that we don’t let people down. It means that they can depend on us in the long haul.” Riders experience freedom and independence, especially those who cannot use paratransit services.

Let your mission be your guide:

“Community input is a key to determining the most appropriate service for a ride.”

*Ride Connection*

“Mission and values are the basis for the services we provide.”

*Kaunoa Senior Services*

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## Build Services to Support Community Values and Needs

**Offer services that respond to locally-determined customer needs:** this rule was stressed by participants in all the case studies. The core mission of door-through-door services seems to be a passion for responding with patience and sensitivity to personal travel needs of individual seniors who face special travel challenges.

Door-through-door services offer more adaptable, flexible services than other transportation options typically provide.

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## Work for Sufficient Financial Support

Economic considerations are certainly a key factor. Any transportation service needs dependable resources for hiring staff; vehicles (if purchased by the program); gas and maintenance; expenses

for recruiting, retaining, and reimbursing volunteers; reporting to sponsors; and the many other functions necessary for organizational survival. Budgeting and fundraising are significant activities for any operation. Nearly all of the sites contacted to develop information for this Guide felt constrained by insufficient funds and indicated that they could provide additional trips and serve additional clients with greater funding.

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## Focus on the Personal Needs of Riders and Others

A key feature of successful programs is a strong emphasis on customer service. This requires day-to-day monitoring of on-time performance, which may suggest improvements to scheduling practices. Regular assessments of customer satisfaction are highly recommended through techniques including telephone and mail surveys, focus groups with riders, and tracking the types and frequency of complaints. Helping others can be extremely satisfying for those who offer the assistance. It is important that you stress the importance of personal assistance when recruiting and recognizing volunteers and paid staff. Door-through-door transportation services also provide real assistance to persons who act as caregivers for seniors and others in need of highly personalized transportation services, and this fact should be stressed in public information campaigns about your services. These services are extremely important to the quality of life of the riders, their caregivers, and those providing the rides.

“Knowing you  
Kaunoa people  
these past few  
months greatly  
helped my healing  
and enriched my life.  
God bless you all!”

*A comment from a rider  
in response to a  
Kaunoa Senior Services  
Assisted Transportation  
Evaluation.*

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## Recruit, Hire, and Train Sensitive Drivers, Escorts, and Other Staff

Transportation providers who offer personal, hands-on support, take on an even greater commitment to both their riders and drivers, to excel in recruiting, screening, training, and supervising drivers, escorts, and other staff. When these persons are volunteers, recognition and reimbursement also are important. Such practices are particularly important because drivers and escorts become the primary and most direct contact with the riders and thus become “the face of the transportation service.” They can also be the best source of information about changes in a rider’s health status and other conditions.

It is common for strong personal friendships to develop between the riders and their drivers or escorts on door-through-door transportation

services. Drivers and escorts must be sensitive to riders' needs and limitations, as well as to the operating practices of local human services programs. Program directors need to be able to explain to the client or the rider what door-through-door is, how it operates, and how he or she (as the rider/customer) can make the services run more smoothly. Some services (for example, Bedford Ride) require a family member to ride with the driver as an escort for trips requiring a high level of personal attention and assistance. Personnel policies are also critical to a program's risk management practices.

Kaunoa Senior Services, operating within county hiring procedures, has an extensive applicant approval process that includes psychometric testing, a wide range of interviews, and a check on character and values. The entire staff then meets to select the most appropriate candidate. Ride Connection performs criminal investigations and drug and alcohol testing for their partner agencies when appropriate. After local community approval, Bedford Ride screens potential applicants using drug tests, criminal record checks, and DMV record checks. Gadabout checks driving records and community recommendations, and their applicants all undergo physical examinations.

Most programs explicitly recognize the need for high-quality driver training, but their requirements vary. Gadabout has quite rigorous requirements, requiring all drivers (both paid and volunteer) to obtain Commercial Drivers' Licenses and then to participate in a multi-week apprenticeship program. Ride Connection requires training in program orientation, vehicle orientation with wheelchair securement, road experience and testing, blood borne pathogens exposure control, defensive driver training, and training in mobility awareness and assistance. Driver orientation for Kaunoa Senior Services includes training on mission and values and taking new drivers to meet with clients. If there is time, training includes a 1- to 2-month orientation period during which the new driver rides with experienced drivers to observe appropriate behavior with the clients. After a driver begins to provide rides, the Kaunoa administrator conducts occasional checks to reinforce positive driver behavior. West Austin and TRIP have driver manuals for their volunteers. Bedford Ride provides training in defensive driving and operation of a ramp van.

"This is a friends helping friends program."

*TRIP*

These services often function best with a dynamic leader, a dedicated person who combines the passion and sensitivity for personal service with an ability to engage community political and social leaders in supporting door-through-door services.

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## **Involve Community Leaders, Enlist Local Sparkplugs**

Managers of successful services tell us that “if community leaders are part of the program, they have a personal investment in the program’s success.” While such advice seems obvious, it has been too often ignored by program operators, sometimes to their detriment. Local elected officials, business community leaders, human service directors, leaders of faith communities, media leaders, and others can play vital roles as sponsors, fundraisers, marketeers, board members, volunteers, or even drivers — and, someday, they may be riders of your program. Community sparkplugs, defined as charismatic leaders who can offer time and energy, are seen as vital to starting up new services. Close communication and coordination with human service agency partners also is important for it offers the potential for preparing transportation service providers to become sensitive to the special needs of certain riders. For example, many rural public transportation services have evolved from human service agencies, and these systems are recognized as providing customer-oriented services rather than just operating a fleet of vehicles.

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## **Focus on Efficient Services**

Most communities have greater transportation needs than they can fulfill. Successful door-through-door services pay attention to techniques to make their services more efficient. Even low-cost services that make extensive use of volunteers recognize that volunteers’ time is a precious resource and needs to be managed carefully. For example, West Austin Caregivers makes sure that volunteers understand the amount of time required for providing different types of services (door-through-door, ride sharing, trips with multiple stops, and others) because time is a key consideration in the number of trips that can be provided in a given day. In New York, Gadabout puts groceries in cartons and labels the cartons with each rider’s name so that it is easier to identify (and then carry) the groceries for each rider.

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## **Work with Partners to Build a Comprehensive Human Services Network in Your Community**

Transportation programs — especially door-through-door transportation programs — do not operate in a vacuum. When these



programs provide trips, they come in contact with individuals who may need many kinds of services, with other individuals whose helping hands give new meaning to their own lives, and with human service programs providing a variety of services. (Bedford Ride specifically cited such “intelligence gathering” as one of the key by-products of their services.) Transportation providers need to work with other community-based agencies to ensure that a full range of customer-oriented services (including transportation) is offered to the seniors who need them the most. For example, the local Area Agency on Aging sponsors Bedford Ride. In the case of TRIP, the Information and Referral network of the local Area Agency on Aging refers a number of riders to the program. West Austin Caregivers has links with the spiritual community, and also enjoys informal relationships with human service agencies.

Partner agencies to be considered in developing a comprehensive human services network in your community:

- ✦ your local Area Agency on Aging,
- ✦ senior centers,
- ✦ Adult Protective Services,
- ✦ other human service programs,
- ✦ all current transportation providers,
- ✦ foundations,
- ✦ local charitable and interfaith organizations,
- ✦ hospitals,
- ✦ for-profit providers, local government, and any others who might qualify as local “movers and shakers” in human service and transportation programs.

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## Adapt to Changes and Challenges

Services for seniors and local transportation services operate in ever-changing environments of personalities, community support, funding opportunities, and publicity. It’s important to continue to bring new

ideas to this constantly changing mix. Commonly occurring challenges include

- ✦ Obtaining sufficient funding, and then finding sufficient staff.
- ✦ Understanding and working with restrictions on the use of specific funds.
- ✦ Recruiting and retaining volunteers.
- ✦ Providing appropriate staff training, supervision, and recognition.
- ✦ Understanding and working with insurance requirements.
- ✦ Serving long-distance trips (a particular problem in rural areas).
- ✦ Increasing community awareness of your services.
- ✦ Finding and applying advanced technologies to increase your cost-effectiveness.

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *How Do Others Handle Risks and Insurance?*

Each of the six programs contacted when developing this Guide had some concerns about risks and insurance.

Concerns related to insurance, liability, risk, and risk management can present major challenges to providing, or even considering the possibility of providing, door-through-door transportation, according to managers of transportation services that provide (or have considered providing) door-through-door services. Such concerns often relegate door-through-door transportation to a “Don’t ask, don’t tell” service. In the words of one provider, “You don’t ask your insurance company if you can do it, and you don’t tell them you are doing it.” Whether these barriers are real or perceived, they can present an obstacle to providing door-through-door services.

To answer insurance questions correctly, step back a bit and consider the broader topic of **risk management**. The purpose of a risk management or modification strategy is to

- ✦ Identify risks related to liability,
- ✦ Discover methods of limiting exposure to risks, and
- ✦ Finance losses that may result from damages to people or equipment with appropriate insurance.

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## How Can I Minimize the Risks?

Providing transportation of any kind includes certain types of exposure and related risks. Transportation services and programs that facilitate or provide door-through-door transportation are faced with additional risk concerns, as the need for reasonable and prudent operational conduct is extended to include activities related to extra “supportive assistance” to and into the home, in the vehicle, and to and into the destination.

Good risk management is a fundamental part of superior overall management strategies. While good management practices such as safe driving standards, driver training, and preventive maintenance are valid in their own right, they also establish the basis for good risk management. Appendix B presents more details about valuable risk management strategies and practices.

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## What Kind of Insurance Do I Need?

**Door-through-door transportation services finance their risk in a variety of ways.** Some services purchase auto liability policies. Others purchase auto liability coverage and commercial general liability coverage. Still others purchase workman’s compensation, professional liability, auto liability, and general liability and commercial general liability coverage. In the case of volunteer driver programs, insurance coverage may include a volunteer insurance policy that includes accident, personal liability, and excess auto liability, as well as commercial general liability and non-owned automobile insurance coverage.

**Vehicle ownership** is a major factor in acquiring insurance coverage for community-based transportation programs.

- ✦ Gadabout has a large (but expensive) umbrella liability policy covering both paid and volunteer drivers both in and outside of the vehicle.
- ✦ Bedford Ride owns and insures the vehicles that are used for 90 percent of its trips.
- ✦ Kaunoa Senior Services does not purchase insurance; instead, it assumes liability for the operations of the vehicles it owns.
- ✦ Ride Connection owns some of its vehicles and also uses the vehicles owned by volunteer drivers; the program provides

primary insurance coverage for the vehicles it owns and secondary insurance coverage on vehicles owned by volunteer drivers. Ride Connection's partner agencies are required to maintain their own insurance policies, which Ride Connection checks twice a year.

- ✦ West Austin Caregivers and TRIP use vehicles owned by the volunteer drivers for providing door-through-door services and, thus, the driver's insurance provides primary insurance coverage while the program insurance provides secondary coverage.

These brief descriptions indicate that, if the vehicle is owned by the program, the program carries the primary insurance on the vehicle and the activities related to providing door-through-door transportation. Alternately, if the vehicle is owned by the driver, then the driver's insurance is primary and the program's insurance is secondary in the event of a claim. Note that none of the case sites reported any incidents "outside of the car," meaning outside the driving function.

Some **special kinds of personal assistance** provided by door-through-door transportation services may affect insurance issues. See Appendix B for more details about insurance strategies and practices.

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## *How Do I Find Drivers and Other Staff?*

Communities vary substantially in their approaches to recruiting drivers and other staff. For example,

- ✦ Bedford Ride depends on local communities to recruit and supervise volunteers, feeling that local involvement is the key to finding responsible individuals.
- ✦ In the TRIP program, riders recruit the majority of the drivers.
- ✦ Gadabout uses word of mouth and radio advertising to attract paid and volunteer drivers.
- ✦ West Austin uses contacts through sponsoring organizations.
- ✦ Ride Connection uses a variety of techniques, including public speaking, contacts from current drivers, newspaper stories, and on-line volunteer web sites.
- ✦ Drivers are recruited through the county hiring process for Kaunoa Senior Services.

Finding volunteers can be a challenge, but not necessarily more so for door-through-door transportation services than for other volunteer activities. Some people volunteer in response to a request from a friend, an advertisement in the newspaper, a message in the church bulletin, an announcement on the radio or TV, or a presentation at a meeting. On occasion, volunteers may be reluctant to use their own cars, to drive people they don't know, to risk the possibility of a crash, to spend their own money on gasoline, or to spend the time driving great distances. Some volunteers also express concerns about the extra time it takes to go into a person's house or to wait with the passenger at the doctor's office. West Austin found that effective ways to overcome these concerns include

- ✦ Being very clear about tasks that are required and the amount of time that these tasks will usually require.
- ✦ Matching different kinds of tasks to the differing skills and personalities of particular volunteers.
- ✦ Providing other volunteers to share the volunteer experience by acting as escorts (sometimes called "ride along buddies").

Recruiting and retaining volunteers can be enhanced by adopting and publicizing a three-tiered strategy. Your organization will be more attractive to volunteers if it (1) takes reasonable steps to control risks that threaten the health and safety of individuals who provide service, (2) develops proper training and supervision strategies to protect personnel from the service environment, the service recipients, and the general public, and (3) establishes visible and credible volunteer recognition programs through which individuals are recognized for their service. Credible recognition programs include awards, dinners, prizes, and publicity in agency newsletters.

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### *How Do I Select the Best Candidates?*

Develop written criteria for staff responsibilities, screening, and selection. Criteria can include basic functions of the position, abilities required to perform specific tasks, and sensitivity to the limitations of riders (the reasons people need door-through-door transportation). In the case of door-through-door support, it is important to spell out specific activities required, as well as activities that are allowed and not allowed.

Door-through-door services need “people-oriented” staff members.

Whether drivers and other staff are paid or volunteers, many door-through-door transportation services use rigorous selection criteria to **find individuals who have a personality that includes the kind of “service orientation” needed to assist seniors and others who need door-through-door transportation services.** The kinds of reviews conducted by door-through-door transportation programs may include community recommendations, a wide range of interviews, checks on character and values, criminal investigations, drug and alcohol testing, and DMV record checks. Some programs require physical and psychometric examinations of their final candidates. Close coordination with human service agency partners can provide substantial assistance in helping transportation staff become more sensitive to the special needs of certain riders. Table 3 shows the kinds of personnel screening techniques used by the six case study programs.

**Table 3:  
KEY PERSONNEL SCREENING TECHNIQUES USED AT  
THE CASE STUDY SITES**

<i>Personnel screening techniques</i>	<i>Programs using this as a key technique</i>
DMV driving record checks	All programs
Criminal investigations	Bedford Ride, Gadabout, Kaunoa, Ride Connection
Drug and alcohol testing	Bedford Ride, Gadabout, Kaunoa, and, to a limited extent, Ride Connection
Community references; checks on character and values	Bedford Ride, Gadabout, Kaunoa, West Austin
Physical health examinations	Gadabout
In-depth interviews	Kaunoa
On the road performance with passengers	Kaunoa, Gadabout
Other testing	Kaunoa, Ride Connection

Some volunteer driver programs (such as West Austin Caregivers or TRIP) face limitations in manpower and funds and, because of scarce resources, limit their screening. Interestingly, while elder abuse and theft are two of the reasons given for performing intensive screening in door-through-door transportation programs, neither West Austin Caregivers nor TRIP has reported incidents of either problem.

Drivers often are referred to as “the heart and soul” of transportation services. This is because, in addition to taking the passenger from point A to point B, drivers play many other roles such as friend, listener, communicator, and advocate. Drivers typically are the people who provide the supportive services associated with door-through-door transportation, and special attention needs to be given to candidates for driving.

Drivers typically become friends with and advocates for their riders.

The “perfect mix” of volunteers and paid staff to serve as drivers or in other roles seems to depend entirely on local conditions and philosophies. In all cases, administrative staff positions are paid positions, but all of the cases relied on volunteer drivers, at least to some extent. Bedford Ride, TRIP, and West Austin have no paid drivers.

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### *How Do I Keep My Drivers?*

Maintaining a well-trained, enthusiastic driving staff is said to be the key to the success of any transportation program. Important features to remember when developing or managing a driver workforce are (1) that all paid or volunteer drivers, whether using agency vehicles or their own personal vehicles, should be appropriately trained to safely carry out their responsibilities and (2) that volunteer drivers should follow the same policies and procedures as paid drivers (if any) operating similar vehicles. A good driver retention program also requires ongoing supervision, recognition, and evaluation. These activities are important for providing assurance to the organization that the drivers are performing as requested and expected, but they also provide important communication and feedback to the volunteer drivers. Such communication, information sharing, and feedback is absolutely critical to the development and retention of a successful and dynamic volunteer driver program. Volunteer recognition awards, dinners, prizes, and newsletters are great ways of saying “thank you” for the time and effort donated.

One important way of retaining volunteer drivers is to stress the benefits to them of providing services to others, especially since healthy aging requires keeping mentally and physically active, and many older volunteers find their lives enriched by having meaningful roles in helping others. Drivers, whether paid or volunteer, report that great satisfaction comes from

- ✦ “Being able to help others and give back a service to the community that is so needed and so appreciated by the riders.”
- ✦ “Feeling that what I do is greatly appreciated by those who I transport . . . and those I work for.”

Another way to retain drivers is to alleviate concerns about rider safety and provide information and/or training about how to help a person who uses a walker or wheel chair or what to do in the event of an emergency. Bedford Ride asks family members to perform difficult or stressful tasks such as lifting riders; Kaunoha instructs their drivers to “refrain from heavy lifting.” Gadabout reports that drivers would often like to provide all sorts of assistance, but they instruct their drivers that some dangerous or high-liability tasks are not appropriate for volunteers. Ride Connection notes that it is hard to get volunteers to drive in rush hour traffic in the early mornings and late afternoons.

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### *Should We Reimburse Volunteers for Mileage?*

When door-through-door transportation programs depend on volunteer drivers, the topic of driver incentives — especially mileage reimbursement — needs to be addressed. Reimbursement decisions vary according to the design of the program, the funds that are available, and the local culture. For example, in Bedford Ride, when the volunteer drives a vehicle owned by the program, the volunteer does not incur out-of-pocket expenses and thus is not eligible for reimbursement for mileage. On the other hand, volunteers drive their own vehicles in the TRIP program, which reimburses the driver for miles driven up to a mileage cap per month. West Austin Caregivers, an interfaith volunteer program, also depends on volunteers but does not reimburse drivers for mileage.

Some volunteer driver programs say it is essential to their success to help pay the expenses related to a volunteer’s use of a personal vehicle. What is the correct amount? How will the reimbursement be paid? Reimbursements are non-taxable as income when they are less than the *Optional Standard Mileage Rates* allowed by the Internal



Revenue Service. These rates are established annually by the IRS and can be changed as economic circumstances change. (The IRS has revised the optional standard mileage rates for computing the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, medical, or moving expense purposes; the new rate for business purposes, effective September 1, 2005, is \$0.485 per mile. Many volunteer programs reimburse drivers of their own vehicles at a lower rate than this.)

If not directly reimbursed, volunteers are allowed to deduct mileage “for charitable contributions” from their taxes at the rate of \$0.14 per mile, which is set by Internal Revenue Code. Volunteers who receive mileage reimbursements from programs that adhere to these guidelines are not required to report their reimbursements in their tax filings. However, if the amount of reimbursement exceeds the amount allowed by *IRS Optional Standard Mileage Rates*, the excess amount is treated as income.

You may want to consider other forms of reimbursement such as a per trip reimbursement or a non-reimbursement incentive approach or a combination of the two — but be careful about the IRS regulations. A per trip rather than a per mile reimbursement is an alternative form of reimbursement that programs may want to consider in communities where distances are very short. Be sure to ask volunteers what they prefer and to forecast reimbursement or incentive expenses.

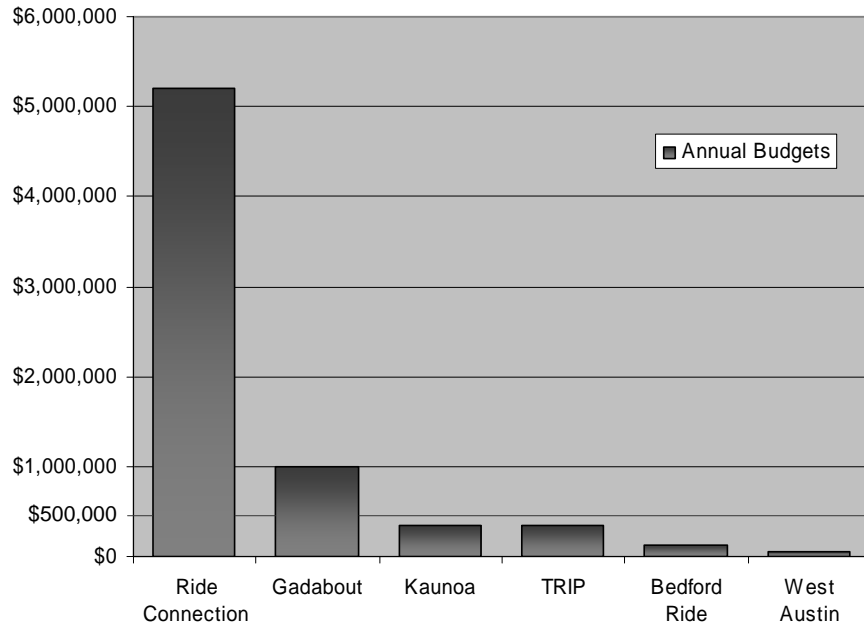
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### *How Much Money Do I Need?*

Programs contacted in the development of this Guide had widely varying levels of operation and correspondingly wide variations in their budgets: from tens of thousands of dollars per year to multi-million dollar operations. (See Figure 1.) Still, nearly all of the sites felt that they could provide additional trips and serve additional clients with greater funding.

Again, **the funding needed depends on the organizational structure and the level of service provided.** A small, informal operation with volunteer drivers, some paid administrative staff, limited reimbursement of volunteer mileage costs, and a relatively limited number of rides (less than 8,000 trips of relatively short distances) might be possible for less than \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year. Most door-through-door services will provide less than 50,000 one-way trips per year; only a few will provide more than 100,000. Per trip costs

will often average in the \$10 to \$15 range, except in the case of many long-distance trips, when per-trip costs will be in the \$20 to \$30 range. Annual budgets of \$250,000 or more are common for the larger services. “Average services” studied by the Beverly Foundation had annual budgets of about \$50,000.



**Figure 1:  
ANNUAL BUDGETS OF CASE STUDY PROGRAMS**

Supporting the larger budgets of the larger services often requires coordination with multiple partners (which is a good idea for many reasons besides funding). Some of the key funding sources for door-through-door transportation services for seniors are listed in Table 4. More than 60 Federal agencies provide funds that can be used for human service transportation (but note that the nine largest programs provide nearly 92 percent of the available funding). For a complete list of these Federal funding sources, see the United We Ride web site at <http://www.unitedweride.gov/>.

**Table 4:  
KEY FUNDING SOURCES FOR  
DOOR-THROUGH DOOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES  
FOR SENIORS**

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Common name</i>	<i>Official name</i>	<i>Typically provides . . .</i>
Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Title III	Grants for Supportive Services and Senior Centers	Funding for assisted transportation, other transportation services, and other services for seniors
Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation	Section 5310	Capital Assistance Program for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities	Funds for vehicles and other capital equipment for services for seniors and persons with disabilities
Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation	Section 5311	Nonurbanized Area Formula Grant Program	Operating and capital funds for public transportation services in rural communities
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Medicaid	Medicaid	Reimbursement for trips by qualified low-income and other individuals for medical purposes
State agencies	Special human service and transportation programs, special taxes	Varies by state	Funds for trips for persons or equipment for transportation systems
Local governments and human service agencies	Local revenues, including special taxes for transportation	Varies by locality	Funds for trips for persons or equipment for transportation systems, especially by contracts for services to specific clients
Local private sources	Groceries, malls, doctors, private insurance	Varies by source	Copayment or travel incentive programs

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## SUMMARY

Door-through-door transportation services help satisfy very serious transportation needs of some older persons. Research has shown that it is indeed possible to establish and maintain door-through-door transportation services for seniors and other riders in ways that reflect community values and constraints. Good services, especially well-publicized services, will be highly utilized.

Door-through-door services allow people to age in place. Riders can stay in their own homes and enjoy their independence. They can be better connected with their community and can maintain their support network. This is vital for people who have no other transportation options. Thus, offering door-through-door transportation services is certainly more cost-effective than some alternative options, such as moving some seniors to nursing homes.

To establish successful door-through-door transportation services, you will need to:

- ✦ Choose the most appropriate services for your community;
- ✦ Work closely with key partners;
- ✦ Focus on individualized services;
- ✦ Build services that support the unique values and needs of your own community;
- ✦ Obtain sufficient financial support;
- ✦ Focus on the riders to build strong consumer-oriented services;
- ✦ Recruit, hire, and train staff to be sensitive to consumer needs;
- ✦ Involve community leaders, enlist local sparkplugs;
- ✦ Focus on efficient services;
- ✦ Work with partners to ensure a comprehensive local service network for seniors and others in need; and
- ✦ Adapt to changes and challenges.

**Door-through-door transportation services provide nurturing, enabling, and caring for seniors who may be struggling to maintain their independence.** These services provide mobility to

persons who could barely travel otherwise, if at all. As the Supervisor at Kaunoha Senior Services so eloquently observed, by offering personal, hands-on assistance, these programs truly are “providing the trips that feed the seniors’ spirits.”

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## RESOURCES FOR MORE ASSISTANCE

### ***Publications***

Jon E. Burkhardt and Helen Kerschner. ***Door-through-Door Transportation Services: Responding to the Personal Travel Needs of Older Adults***. Prepared by Westat and the Beverly Foundation for the Administration on Aging, July 2005.

Jon E. Burkhardt, ***Seniors Benefit from Transportation Partnerships: Promising Practices from the Aging Network: Resource Guide***. Prepared by Westat for the Administration on Aging, 2005.

Beverly Foundation. ***Supplemental Transportation Programs for Seniors***. Prepared with support from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Washington, DC, 2001.

Beverly Foundation. ***Survey of Volunteer Driver Programs and Volunteer Drivers***. 2004.

Beverly Foundation and the Community Transportation Association of America. ***Innovations for Seniors***. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC, 2004.

Jon E. Burkhardt, Adam T. McGavock, Charles A. Nelson, and Christopher G. B. Mitchell. ***Improving Public Transit Options for Older Persons: TCRP Report 82***. Prepared by Westat for the Transit Cooperative Research Program, Transportation Research Board, The National Academies, 2002.

***Enhancing Mobility Options for Older Americans: A Five Year National Action Agenda***. AARP, Washington, DC, 2005.

***Freedom to Travel***. U. S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics. 2003.

Jane Hardin. ***Senior Transportation: Toolkit and Best Practices***. Community Transportation Association of America, Washington, DC, 2003.

***A Golden Opportunity, Managing the Risks of Service to Seniors***. Housing Authority Insurance Group and Nonprofit Risk Management Center, Washington, DC, 2003.

Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates. *Senior Mobility Toolkit*. Final Report for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Oakland, CA, 2003.

*Volunteer Drivers: A Guide to Best Practices*. The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation. Tacoma, Washington, 2002.

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## **Useful Web Sites**

For information on aging:

Administration on Aging, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, <http://www.aoa.gov>

Federal Interagency Council on Aging Statistics, <http://www.agingstats.gov/about.html>

AARP Policy and Research, <http://www.aarp.org/research/>

The National Center for Health Statistics, Data Warehouse on Trends in Health and Aging, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/agingact.htm>

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For information regarding current Federal coordinated transportation activities:

Visit the web site of the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, <http://www.unitedweride.gov/>

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For information on transportation systems and related research:

American Public Transportation Association: Provides a great deal of information about public transportation systems around the US. <http://www.apta.com>

The Beverly Foundation's website contains snapshots, white papers, research papers, and technical assistance materials on transportation services for seniors. <http://www.beverlyfoundation.org>

Community Transportation Association: Provides a host of resources on senior transportation.

[http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/senior\\_publications.asp](http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/senior_publications.asp)

Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility,

<http://www.unitedweride.gov/>

Easter Seals Project ACTION: Provides information on transportation services for persons with special needs.

<http://projectaction.easter-seals.org>

Federal Transit Administration, U. S. Department of Transportation,

<http://www.fta.dot.gov>

The Transportation Research Board, especially their Transportation Research Information Service (TRIS), their Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP), and their National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP).

<http://trb.org> and <http://www4.trb.org/trb/tris.nsf> and

<http://www4.trb.org/trb/crp.nsf>

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### For information on risk management:

Nonprofit Risk Management Center, Washington, DC,

<http://www.nonprofitrisk.org>

Risk Management Resource Center, [www.eriskcenter.org](http://www.eriskcenter.org)



## APPENDIX A:

# INFORMATION FROM 22 CASES OF DOOR-THROUGH-DOOR TRANSPORTATION FOR SENIORS

A large number of candidate sites were recommended by various sources as potentially offering good information regarding door-through-door transportation services for seniors. Sources contacted included State Units on Aging, state Departments of Transportation, Area Agencies on Aging, local transportation providers, individuals and organizations involved in research efforts regarding specialized transportation services, and published reports.

Based on these contacts, information was collected on 22 door-through-door transportation services. All 22 sites were contacted by telephone, and these contacts were supplemented by additional sources. The information gathered is summarized in the following table. Based on the information collected, six sites were selected for in-depth study. These are the sites discussed in this report.

In the table that follows, the cases selected for in-depth study are presented first. The cases are presented alphabetically by state.

**Table A-1:  
DOOR-THROUGH-DOOR TRANSPORTATION:  
CASE STUDY SITES**

<i>State</i>	<i>Organization / Project</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Year founded</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Areas of interest</i>
<b>IN-DEPTH CASE STUDIES</b>							
CA	Transportation Reimbursement and Information Program [TRIP]	Riverside County	Primarily suburban	1993	Contracts, tax revenue, government grants	Very large; 600 volunteer drivers; \$350,000/yr; 35,000 annual trips	Serves frail elders and persons with disabilities. Does trip chaining. Approximately 80 percent of riders select their own driver, who is reimbursed by the system. Also provides education and counseling. Is affiliated with the local AAA.
HI	Kaunoha Senior Services	Maui County	Urban and rural	1981	Funding is from fares, state (Title III), and county.	six full-time and two part-time paid drivers; 15-25 volunteers; 17,000 annual trips; 428 riders; \$350,000 annual budget	Kaunoha Senior Services provides services to seniors using county-owned station wagons. Trained and paid drivers provide most of the services, including escorting clients through the door. Volunteers also provide services for overflow or last minute requests. The staff form personal ties with the seniors and often volunteer to provide transportation to special events and trips. In addition to medical appointments, health care and banking trips, county funds are used to provide trips that "feed the seniors' spirits" (e.g., shopping, excursions, luncheons).
NY	Gadabout Transportation Services, Inc.	Ithaca	Urban and rural	1976	Sec. 5310 funding for vehicles, fees, contracts, tax revenues, fare boxes, and government grants	42 drivers--12 paid, 30 volunteer; \$995,802 annual budget	Evolved from donation to fee-based program. 61,202 one-way rides, 73 percent female riders. Primary trips: medical, shopping, recreation. Also provides ADA paratransit services for the local fixed route transit service, Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit.

<i>State</i>	<i>Organization / Project</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Year founded</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Areas of interest</i>
OR	Ride Connection, Inc.	Portland	Urban, suburban, rural	1988	Tri-Met, rider donations, funds from 30 agencies	Large: 405 volunteers and 243 paid drivers; 300,000 trips in FY 2004; \$5.2 million total capital and operating budget	Services are integrated with Portland's mass transit system, and also provided to areas not served by transit. Substantial focus on escort services. Some volunteer couples, one driving and one escorting. Volunteers also act as information resources. A local AAA provides some funding.
TX	West Austin Caregivers, a member of Partners in Caregiving (eight interfaith caregiver transportation providers)	Greater Austin Area	Urban and suburban	1983, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1994, 2004	Individual donations and grant funding, partnership collaboration for funding	85 volunteer drivers (approx); \$54,675 annual budget	All organizations are 501c3 interfaith caregiver groups. All have received funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Partners in Caregiving was created in 2002 as mechanism for coordinating via: (1) Creating eight sectors in Austin area; (2) Organizing joint fundraising and volunteer recruitment efforts; (3) Orchestrating promotional and information sharing campaigns; and (4) Cooperating in technical assistance and training.
VA	Bedford Ride, sponsored by the Central Virginia Area Agency on Aging (CVAAA)	Bedford	Rural	2001	Congressional appropriations, FTA 5310 capital funds, county, foundations, city, churches, American Cancer Society [No Title III funds]	160 volunteers, including seniors and persons with disabilities. \$133,000 per year	Innovative approach to volunteer recruitment; system-owned vehicles; local hospital donates space and phones. Non-emergency medical transportation and shopping trips only [no Medicaid trips]. Some long-distance trips. Policies [except for safety] set by local communities. The AAA has obtained Section 5310 minivans with ramps and serves as fiscal agent for the project.

<i>State</i>	<i>Organization / Project</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Year founded</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Areas of interest</i>
<b>OTHER CASES</b>							
AK	Palmer Senior Citizens Center, Inc.	Palmer	Suburban and Rural	1989	Donations, Title V (SCSEP) and Medicaid Waiver, Small amount from State Title III funds	366 Individuals; 21,621 one-way annual trips	Palmer Senior Citizens Center, Inc. has provided assisted transportation since 1989 for individuals age 60+. Trip destinations include adult day services, medical appointments, meal sites etc. Clients are provided assistance in their home prior to the trip with coats and boots in the winter or in leaving the building. Assistance is also provided at the destination; for medical appointments, the escort checks that the time and place are correct. The borough is roughly 20,000 square miles and transportation is provided at the core of this area. The area is one of the fastest growing in the nation and their transportation has increased by 20 percent in the last year.
CO	Special Transit	Boulder	Suburban	1979	United Way, private individuals, government grants, tax revenue, fare box, and contracts	52 paid drivers	Covers three counties. Door-through-door only. Provides circular route, demand response, paratransit, and ADA paratransit service. A total of 114,000 one-way rides; \$2,200,000 budget. Primary trips: medical, shopping, personal.
FL	Bay County Council on Aging - Bay County Transportation	Panama City	Urban	1983	Fees, contracts, fare box, government grants	43 paid drivers	Covers entire county; only provides one-way rides, 1,100,000 rides in 2003; Acts as service provider and broker. Budget of \$2,110,000. Provides fixed route, deviated fixed route, and demand response service.

<i>State</i>	<i>Organization / Project</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Year founded</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Areas of interest</i>
IL	Effingham County FISH Human Service	Effingham	Urban, suburban, rural	1976	Fundraising dinners facilitated by volunteer drivers; 22 percent budget tax revenue or public aid, 16percent rider donations, 60 percent general donations	58 volunteer drivers, 273 riders served; \$7,300 annual budget	Program owned and driver vehicle used; medical only rides, but volunteers take riders anywhere they want to go
IL	Volunteer Action of De Kalb	Sycamore	Rural	1974	Fees, contracts, tax revenue, fare boxes, government grants	40 drivers: 25 paid, 15 volunteers	160,000 one-way rides, serves 2,000 annual riders. Budget of \$1,200,000. Primary trips: medical, shopping, personal, and recreational; uses buses and vans
KS	Johnson City Catch A Ride	Olathe	90% suburban, 10% rural	1999	Supported by government at \$50,000 per year; 100 percent tax revenue plus rider donations	75 volunteer drivers	Government agency, administered by the AAA. 5,136 rides, 135 riders served; \$50,000 budget; uses riders' vehicles. Major trips: medical, shopping, and recreational. Does not raise funds, but says funding volunteer driver program is biggest challenge.

<i>State</i>	<i>Organization / Project</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Year founded</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Areas of interest</i>
MA	Elder Services of the Merrimac Valley	Lawrence	Suburban, urban, some rural	1997	Foundations, Title III	1,068 rides provided in 1998	Elder Services of the Merrimac Valley, the AAA, created a large family of transportation providers, some with paid drivers. Volunteer drivers also act as medical advocate if needed. Trips are mainly long-distance medical trips to the Boston area. Focus is on very frail seniors. Has struggled at times to recruit volunteers.
ME	Independent Transportation Network	Portland	Small urban	1995	Donations and user fees	Small service area includes two cities; 16,000 trips per year; \$240,000 per year	Focus on payments from riders; sliding fare schedule based on responsiveness, time of day, shared rides, and other factors. Paid and volunteer drivers. Some subsidies for low-income riders. This program developed within the AAA but is now independent.
MI	Macomb County Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers	Warren	Suburban	1992	47 percent fundraising in community, 40 percent grants, 13 percent donations from riders	302 volunteer drivers	215 riders, 2,744 rides in 2003, budget of \$39,186, primary trips: medical, shopping, and personal rides, major problem: funding (no rider fees)
NC	Swain Public Transit Community Driver Program	Bryson City	Rural (multi-county)	1972	Government grants only, started with Disabilities Studies grant from University of Mississippi	18 drivers total; 7 paid, 11 volunteer	28,000 seniors served with transportation; \$215,000 annual budget for volunteer program. Primary trips: medical, shopping, nutrition, recreation; vehicles include vans and automobiles

<i>State</i>	<i>Organization / Project</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Year founded</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Areas of interest</i>
NH	Grafton County Senior Citizen's Council	Lebanon	Rural	1972	80 percent grants, 10 percent rider donations, 10 percent fundraising	52 volunteer drivers	44,000 one-way rides in 2003; budget of \$14,640; major trips: medical, shopping, nutrition; uses drivers' vehicles.
NY	Fulton County Office for Aging	Johnstown	Rural and Suburban	Early 1980s	Title III, County, and Local funds	8,000 Annual Trips; \$20,000 Annual Budget	This AAA-provided escort program includes driver assistance or an aide on the transit bus who assists seniors to get on the bus and escorts them into their appointments. The area is very rural and poor with no other type of door-to-door transportation available. The transportation services were originally provided directly by the Office on Aging but are now subcontracted.
OH	United Scioto Senior Activities	Scioto County	Suburban and Rural	1996	Title IIIB, State Senior Community Services funds, Levy dollars, Title XX Local Dept. of Job and Family Services.	~6,500 Annual Trips	Program is in place for 18 years. Using six part-time drivers, the program serves approximately 120 individuals a week and makes 24-30 trips a day. Drivers are paid a salary and mileage for the use of their own vehicles. Seniors call in knowing that they will receive personalized treatment that they deserve; they feel part of a "club."
SC	Keowee Cares: Need A Ride	Salem	Rural	1999	Donations from community, 25 percent rider donations, memorial gifts, community donations	108 volunteer drivers	Operates in 50 mile radius, budget of \$2,500 in 2003; 65 percent of drivers are over age 65 and 85 percent are male.

<i>State</i>	<i>Organization / Project</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Year founded</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Areas of interest</i>
VA	Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc.	Big Stone Gap	Rural	1974	Title III, contracts with other agencies, some donations, fees, contract relationships, fare box, rider donations, government and private grants	Large service area, 43 paid drivers	Local public transportation provider. Uses paid drivers to transport seniors and others in an high-poverty area to multiple destinations. Transportation services have even included moving household goods. Budget of \$1,014,302. Total of 122,322 one-way rides. Trips: medical, shopping, and volunteer activities; have limited hours on evenings and Saturdays. Started from AAA as senior services for transportation and evolved into public transit. The AAA is the program sponsor and provides funding.
WA	Council on Aging and Human Services / COAST [a community service organization]	Colfax	Rural	1983	Many, including Title III, local tax mileages, contracts for services, 54% grant funding 6% donations, 40% other	Large service area, 43 volunteer drivers; \$750,000/yr; 70,000 annual trips	Local public transportation provider. Covers a very large rural area. Coordinating with many agencies and funding sources; many types of riders; significant local tax support; long history of coordination; (66,085 one-way rides, major trips: medical, shopping, personal), 75% drivers are age 65+.



## APPENDIX B:

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

Risk management and insurance are two of the greatest concerns of organizations that provide door-through-door transportation. In many instances, transportation programs believe they have solved their insurance problems once they acquire insurance. However, when they plan to extend their services to include door-through-door supportive transportation, they may find that they need to revisit their risk management strategy and work with their insurance company to acquire additional coverage. This Appendix addresses both topics.

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### *Fundamentals of Risk Management*

As previously noted in the text of this Guide, the purpose of a risk management or modification strategy is to

- ✦ Identify risks related to liability,
- ✦ Discover methods of limiting exposure to risks, and
- ✦ Finance losses which may result from damages to people or equipment with appropriate insurance.

Different kinds of risk management strategies include the following:

- ✦ A ***risk retention*** approach means accepting all or part of the risk and preparing for the consequences if a risk should become a reality.
- ✦ A strategy of ***sharing the risk*** can be implemented by contracting with another agency to provide it.
- ✦ ***Risk avoidance*** could mean electing not to provide door-through-door service at all. If you've read this far in this Guide, you probably aren't interested in this strategy.
- ✦ Many transportation services address the issue head on with what might be called a ***risk modification*** strategy. Such a

strategy is used to identify risk related to liability, discover methods of limiting exposure to risk, and finance with insurance that will cover losses that may result from damages to people or equipment.

According to the Nonprofit Risk Management Center, “good management is good risk management.” In other words, in door-through-door transportation programs, good risk management starts with good overall management policies and programs. In developing or updating your risk modification strategy, you may want to consider the following management policies that could modify or limit your exposure to risk:

- ✦ Set standards for safe drivers and safe driving conduct;
- ✦ Establish specific criteria for selection and screening of drivers;
- ✦ Conduct driver training in
  - defensive driving;
  - emergency measures;
  - passenger (especially senior) treatment; and
  - using special vehicles;
- ✦ Perform regular maintenance and repair of service-owned vehicles;
- ✦ Provide insurance coverage for service-owned and non-owned vehicles;
- ✦ Conduct ongoing evaluation of drivers, vehicles, and service delivery;
- ✦ Apply risk management strategies to volunteers.

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### *Insurance Issues and Strategies*

Effective strategies that door-through-door transportation programs have used when acquiring insurance include:

- ✦ Presenting all activities related to door-through-door service as part of vehicle insurance package. This is a traditional approach to insuring transportation service delivery.
- ✦ Separating exposure to risk related to transportation services within the vehicle from door-through-door “supportive transportation” services provided outside the vehicle. This

approach has been used successfully by transportation paid and volunteer driver programs in New York and Virginia.

- ✦ Insuring transportation services in the vehicle through the purchase of vehicle insurance and a rider to the policy which insures activities door-through-door service activities that take place outside the vehicle. This approach has been used successfully in a program in Oregon.
- ✦ Packaging door-through-door services as part of an entire package of social services that includes transportation. This approach is appropriate when door-through-door transportation is offered through a home health, home care, or visiting nurse agency that provides such service under a case plan.

The most appropriate strategy for your organization depends on local conditions and your relationships with insurance carriers. A number of organizations have secured reasonable and appropriate insurance for their door-through-door transportation programs by separating the delivery of transportation services from the delivery of supportive services.

Whatever the strategy, financing risk through the purchase of insurance coverage may not be simple. Each of the case sites in this Guide indicated that, from their experience, door-through-door transportation services are not well understood either by insurance companies or underwriters. Some transportation programs have been forced to agree not to provide door-through-door transportation in order to obtain insurance. Such arrangements are often required by insurance brokers who are not familiar with door-through-door services, rather than by corporate insurance officers. Because of such instances, financing risk by purchasing insurance is often viewed as the major barrier to the expansion of door-through-door transportation services.

In conclusion, a transportation service provider may think it has developed a good risk management program, only to discover that, by adding door-through-door service, it has added new challenges related to issues of liability, exposure, and insurance. A combination of

- ✦ limiting exposure to liability by maintaining good management policies,
- ✦ providing extensive driver training, and

✦ financing the risk of liability with insurance

can provide the transportation service provider with an effective risk management package for its door-through-door transportation service. Rethinking the contents and organization of the program's risk management policies could offer great promise for taking door-through-door transportation from a "Don't ask, don't tell" service to a "Let's tell and let's deliver" supportive transportation service for seniors.