**VOLUNTEER TRANSPORTATION**

**DEPARTMENTAL POLICY**

**AND**

**PROCEDURE**

**POLICY**

***Policy Statement***

The XXXXX County Volunteer Transportation program is a service of the XXXXX County Department of Health and Human Services which provides assistance to older adults and persons with disabilities who need transportation to a medical related appointments, (examples: medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic).  The program is coordinated under the supervision of the Department’s Aging Unit Manager.  Federal, State, and county allocations, in addition to participant donations, provide funding for the provision of volunteer transportation services.

**PROCEDURE**

The volunteer transportation program is intended to provide transportation service to XXXXX County residents when all other options are unavailable.  As government funding for local programs and services has not kept up with the costs of providing them, it has become imperative that service providers and program participants work together to ensure the continuation of services such as the volunteer program.  In attempting to be as cost-efficient as is possible with the limited funds available to the program, we are strongly encouraging persons to first investigate all other options available to them, and to consider the cost of the service provided to them and donate accordingly.

Persons requesting volunteer transportation service are asked to call the program’s coordinator at XXX-XXX-XXXX between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.  Individuals needing a volunteer driver are required whenever possible to provide a minimum of two (2) working days advance notice to allow the coordinator to schedule a driver.  When calling the volunteer transportation coordinator and requesting a volunteer driver, the coordinator is required to ask if consideration has been given to asking family, friends, and/or neighbors for assistance.  After a caller has considered the above option the county’s coordinator begin work to attempt to arrange a ride.  Even after appropriate notification, there is no guarantee that the department can provide the ride as the program is staffed by community volunteers.  Trip requests may be denied due to staff or driver availability.

As mentioned, funding for the program is derived from Federal, State, and county allocations, and program donations.  As government funding for local programs and services such as the volunteer transportation program are no longer keeping pace with the needs of the community, participant contributions are increasingly being depended upon to sustain these programs.  XXXXX County Aging Unit charges $0.XX per mile driven.  If hardships occur, individuals are directed to contact the XXXXX County Aging Unit Manager for additional follow-up.

When the department is able to schedule a ride, the coordinator will call the person requesting the service back and notify them of their driver’s name, vehicle type, and arrival time.  The recipient of the transportation service is picked up at their home and returned there after the medical appointment is completed.

When requested and if possible, a specific driver will be assigned to a trip unless already committed to another trip or unavailable at that time or day.  Once a driver has been assigned to a specific trip, he/she will not be reassigned unless requested by the drivers themselves.

# Passenger Responsibilities

The program is not intended to provide transportation service within the city limits of XXX, but special circumstances can be approved by the XXXXX County Aging Unit.

Because this is a volunteer service, riders should show consideration to drivers and be at their designated pick-up location at the arranged time.

If an appointment has been changed or canceled, individuals are asked to call the volunteer transportation coordinator immediately so that the scheduled driver can be notified of the change or cancellation.

If hazardous weather occurs, participants are asked to reschedule their appointments, provided that this is possible.  Volunteer drivers are not asked to drive in hazardous weather.

Trips are sometimes scheduled to accommodate the needs of several individuals.  When this occurs, please be considerate of the other passengers before, during and after the medical appointments have been completed.

If you have special needs, please notify the coordinator when requesting the transportation service so that we can attempt to meet them.  XXXXX County’s Volunteer Transportation program is not designed to have drivers physically assist their riders, nor respond to emergency situations.  Our drivers are responsible for making certain that their passengers arrive at their medical appointment on time, and that they keep track of the individual until their appointment is completed.  If more service than this is required, the individual should contact the XXXXX County Minibus or XXXX.  ***This is not an emergency related service.***

If three (3) no call no shows occur, the XXXXX County Aging Unit reserves the right to suspend rider transportation for a time deemed appropriate by the Aging Unit Manager.

# Driver Responsibilities

Drivers, under no circumstances, are reimbursed for driving their own relatives to a medically related appointment.  If a driver’s relative requests a ride, another driver will be assigned to take the trip.

Volunteer drivers are not allowed to accept any gifts of money or goods from persons using the Volunteer Transportation Service.  To accept such gifts would be in violation of State and county regulations.

Volunteer drivers are subject to the XXXXX County Department of Health and Human Services Confidentiality Policy.  Volunteer drivers must fill out the Volunteer Driver Application.  Three references must be checked, a background check and driver inquiry report are completed.  The driver must provide a copy of his/her driver’s license and proof of insurance yearly.

For more information pertaining to this program, contact the Aging Unit or the Volunteer Transportation Coordinator at XXX-XXX-XXXX.