

# Volunteer Driver Programs need your help!

## Learn more about an issue that's affecting communities across Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's volunteer driver programs are at risk of losing even more volunteers because mileage reimbursement is classified as "compensation." Insurance companies view this activity in the same category as driving for Uber or Lyft. Volunteer drivers are seeing higher premiums or losing coverage as a result.

Numerous organizations, public and private, across the state of Wisconsin depend on volunteer drivers to provide essential transportation services to individuals who may have:

- Limited mobility
- No access to personal transportation,
- Specific needs, or
- Disabilities.

The majority of these generous volunteer drivers use their own vehicles to provide transportation services. Without these programs and the support of volunteer drivers, individuals in local

communities would lose access to:

- Healthcare
- Nutritional services
- Employment
- Youth and afterschool programs
- Social engagements

Volunteer drivers are among the most caring and giving individuals we have in our communities.

Volunteer drivers provide the connections and fill the gaps where the public transportation services can't.

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### The problem facing volunteer drivers is affecting programs across Wisconsin:

Volunteer driver programs are losing volunteers due to personal auto insurance companies non-renewing coverage or increasing premiums on volunteer driver auto policies.

Some insurance agencies classify commercial activity as receiving any compensation, even mileage reimbursement, and are non-renewing coverage or increasing rates as a result.

Volunteer driving is being lumped into livery services (for-hire vehicles that are used by businesses to generate revenue by transporting people) and transportation network companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft because they are getting "compensated" for their services.

**Insurance companies view commercial activity as receiving *any* kind of compensation – even mileage reimbursement.**

### Survey conducted to better understand volunteer driver programs:

A survey was conducted across the State of Wisconsin asking volunteer driver programs about their volunteer drivers. The goal of the survey is to understand the makeup of volunteer driver programs to be able to effectively share with the State legislature the impact and value volunteer driver programs bring to the most vulnerable populations in our communities.

- Total of **68** Volunteer driver programs participated.
- Total number of volunteer drivers: **5,632**.
- Total trips (one-way) per month on average = **39,730**.
- Top three trip purposes: **medical, nutrition, and social**.

# Volunteer Driver Programs need your help!

Survey results show the need for volunteer driver personal auto insurance protection

## Biggest barriers in terms of volunteer recruitment and retention:

- Never enough volunteers/Hard to find
- Recruitment is difficult/tactics are not working
- Aging population — volunteers are aging out
- **Financial impact — cost of gasoline/maintenance/Insurance Premiums/Taxes**
- Too much of a time commitment

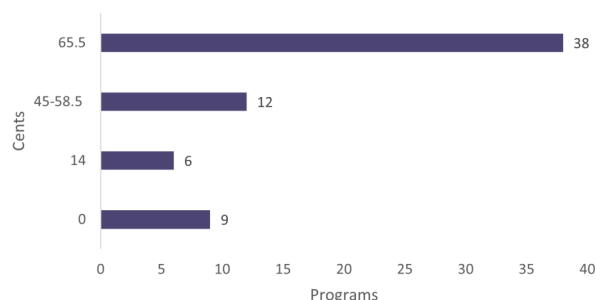
## Conclusion:

As long as insurance companies classify volunteer drivers receiving mileage reimbursement as commercial activity; they will continue to deny coverage or raise premiums and volunteer driver programs will continue to lose existing volunteer drivers and will be unable to recruit new ones.

**86%**

of the programs responding to the survey are providing mileage reimbursement to their volunteer drivers

Mileage Reimbursement Rate



**31%**

of volunteer drivers had to find **alternative insurance** or not accept mileage reimbursement to continue volunteering

**45%**

of volunteer drivers are concerned about **tax implications** of mileage reimbursements

**34%**

of programs lost volunteer drivers due to **increased insurance or denials**

## Action needed:

Contact your [Wisconsin State Legislators](#) and ask them to change the law to **protect our volunteer drivers** from insurance companies classifying volunteer driving as commercial activity.

<https://legis.wisconsin.gov/>

*Disclaimer: The survey was distributed through many different channels, but the focus was on programs serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. It is important to note that volunteer driver programs serve a diverse range of individuals and not all programs are reflected in the results of the survey. A total of 68 programs participated in the survey, but not all answered all the questions. To see total participated for each question, see [survey summary document](#).*

<https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2007933>