Volunteer Drivers in Minnesota
Benefits and Barriers

2016 Study
• Better understanding of
  – Organizations who rely on volunteer drivers
  – Types of Trips
  – Challenges to providing services, including
    • Reimbursement
    • Insurance
• Prioritize
  – Which barriers would be most productively addressed
  – Suggestions for helping providers address these barriers
**Method**

- Developed list and contact information for human service providers in Minnesota
  - building on list from 2015 Vehicle Sharing study
  - Original source: provider directories available at [http://www.coordinatemntransit.org](http://www.coordinatemntransit.org)
- Developed and administered on-line survey examining
  - organization,
  - services provided and
  - challenges faced

**Respondents**

- 230 Providers identified in regional plans
- Surveys sent to 188 valid e-mail addresses
- 45 responded (~24% response rate)
  - 10 metro
- 35 non-metro counties listed as served
Respondents

- 30 respondents utilize volunteer drivers
  - 900 total drivers
  - 50% between ages 65 and 69
- 429 trips per month
- 32,616 volunteer hours per month
  - 36 hours per volunteer per month
  - 391,000 hours each year
Does your organization use volunteer drivers?

- Yes: 29%
- No: 71%

Enough Volunteer Drivers?

- Yes: 32%
- No: 68%
Are Volunteer Drivers hard to find?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Metro</th>
<th>Greater MN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cancelling Trips Due to Lack of Drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you Had to Cancel Trips Due to Lack of Drivers?</th>
<th>Is It Hard to Find Volunteer Drivers?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Obstacles to Volunteer Drivers
Funding and finding drivers were cited as the biggest obstacles

Reimbursement
- Mileage Reimbursement
- No-load Mileage Reimbursement

Reimbursement
- Reimburse: 21%
- Does Not Reimburse: 79%

No-load Mileage Reimbursement
- Reimburses No-Load: 14%
- Does Not Reimburse No-Load: 86%
Rates Used to Calculate Reimbursement

- Charitable: 23%
- Federal Business: 55%
- Other: 23%

“Other” responses included: Below Federal Rate, Organization determined rate

Reimbursement Recommendation

- Consider additional incentives for attracting volunteer drivers, such as allow reimbursement to organizations that pay for no-load miles.
Obstacles to Volunteer Drivers

Funding and finding drivers were cited as the biggest obstacles

- Money: 52%
- Insurance: 43%
- Regulation concerns: 26%
- Other: 61%

Insurance Barriers

- “We are hearing concerns from insurance companies regarding if volunteer drivers needing more than just personal coverage. Also costs insurance costs continue to rise for our umbrella policy for coverage.”
- Drivers feel nervous using their own coverage and want to be covered by organization
- Drivers are afraid their rates will go up
- Some volunteers are told they need special insurance to volunteer
- Insurance companies treating reimbursement as compensation (i.e. as if employees)
Legal / Insurance Issue

- **Volunteer Drivers largely unregulated**
  - Mn Stat 174: sets out regulations for providing these services, and specifically exempts volunteer drivers
  - Rise of transportation network companies (Uber / Lyft) created confusion over whether MN Stat 65b.472 included volunteer drivers

Insurance Recommendation

- Develop a definitive definition of “Volunteer Driver” that can be exempted from “for hire” classification (to clarify 65b.472 issue)
  - Reimbursement rate
  - Trip Purpose
Thank You - Questions?

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- Report available at:
  http://www.cts.umn.edu/Publications/ResearchReports/pdfdownload.pl?id=2768

Respondents

Number of Organizations by Type that Use Volunteer Drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Human</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>For Profit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith Based Non-Human</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Non-Fait Based</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Human</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Transit</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: Blue = Yes, Orange = No
“Other” Obstacles to Volunteer Drivers

- “Not enough drivers”
- “need accessible appropriate vehicles”
- “Having money to pay for expenses before the trip and waiting for reimbursement”
- “Billing procedures for transit reimbursement are cumbersome and vary with each county and insurance company”
- “We are hearing concerns from insurance companies regarding if volunteer drivers needing more than just personal coverage. Also costs insurance costs continue to rise for our umbrella policy for coverage.”