



NVTC Fact Sheet (2018 - Revised)

- **Members of the Family**
This family includes a wide range of transportation options
- **Options and Gaps**
All “family” members may not be available in even when they are, there may be gaps in their use
- **Definitions of Options**
Six types of formal or organized options are defined
- **Common Characteristics**
Common characteristics of options are described
- **Similarities and Differences**
Volunteer driver programs are defined as are their similarities and differences
- **Program Examples**
Five members of the “family” are described.

For More Information Visit

<http://nationalvolunteertransportationcenter.org/>

***NVTC is an Initiative of
CTAA with offices in
Washington, DC &
Albuquerque, New Mexico***

The Family of Transportation Options

MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY

The transportation family includes a variety of options that may or may not be available in a community.

Family Members

Caregivers

Friends who help with errands

Neighbors who live nearby

Public Transit

ADA Paratransit for people with disabilities

Dial-A-Ride and other shuttle services

Community Transit

Volunteer Driver Programs

Private Transit

Ride Share Services

Private automobiles

NEVS (neighborhood, electric vehicles)

Low speed vehicles and Golf carts

Bicycles and Walking

OPTIONS AND GAPS

Even when this broad array of “family members” are available in a community, there are many reasons it still may be difficult for residents to get where they need to go. For example, while the vast majority of people enjoy driving their car, research tells us that people outlive their driving expectancy. For men it’s about 10 years and women about 6 years.

Those who are “transportation dependent” may not have family members, caregivers, friends or neighbors who are able to transport them. Even when public, paratransit, community transit, and ride sharing programs are available, some people may not be able to access them. The same may be true for golf carts, bicycles and walking.

DEFINITIONS & CHARACTERISTICS

Although informal providers of transportation options (family members, friends, neighbors and caregivers) are easily defined, the definitions of the more formal options that may be available in a community may need clarification. Below are six organized transportation options that may or may not be available in a community. These are terms one needs to know when providing transportation, assisting people with transportation, or using transportation.

<u>Public Transit</u>	Public transit is transportation by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public. It may include services by buses, subways, rail, trolleys and ferryboats.
<u>ADA Paratransit</u>	The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) required all public transit systems that provide fixed route bus and rail service to also provide complementary service (usually in vans and small buses) for people with disabilities who cannot use fixed route bus or train.
<u>Dial A-Ride</u>	Dial-A-Ride programs serve people who have a certified disability and often serve older adults. They generally provide curb-to-curb service.
<u>Community Transit</u>	Often referred to as paratransit, community transportation options provide a range of transportation services to a variety of passengers groups. Vehicles may include small buses, autos, or vans.
<u>Private Transit</u>	Private transit generally includes limousines, taxi services, and chauffeur services that require reservations and payment for rides.
<u>Ride Share Services</u>	In the past, ride sharing was considered group transportation to work. Today, specialized ride sharing services such as Uber and Lyft involve drivers who use their own automobiles to provide transportation.
<u>Volunteer Driver Programs</u>	Volunteer driver programs provide rides using volunteer drivers and often volunteer vehicles. They may (or may not) charge for rides, operate at a low cost and often emphasize providing rides to older adult passengers.

Transportation Option Characteristics and Definitions

Common Characteristics

The transportation options described above share a number of common characteristics: in the drivers and vehicles they use; in their methods of providing and managing their rides; in their efforts to limit their exposure, and in their methods of ensuring their sustainability.

- Drivers*** (paid or volunteer or paid & volunteer)
- Vehicles*** (owned or volunteer or owned & volunteer)
- Staff*** (paid and/or volunteer)
- Ride Scheduling*** (staff and/or driver)
- Organization*** (menu or free standing)
- Data Management*** (high tech, low tech, no tech)
- Insurance*** (some, incomplete or no coverage)
- Service area*** (defined or flexible)
- Financial Resources*** (taxes, grants, donations, fees)

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Clearly, the members of “the family of transportation options” vary greatly in the way they are organized (or not organized) the types of services they provide, the ways they can and cannot be accessed, how they can and cannot be adapted to meet passenger needs, and in their affordability for the passengers who use them.

Similarities and Differences

Some provide transportation in urban areas, others in suburban areas, and others in rural areas.

Some have a large staff and multi-million dollar budgets, others have small staff and small budgets.

Some pay drivers, others include paid and volunteer drivers, and others include only volunteer drivers.

Some own large vehicles including buses, subways, and street cars, others own small vehicles or involve vehicles owned by volunteer drivers.

Some provide rides for specific needs (especially health care) others provide rides to any destination.

Some provide millions of rides each year, others provide hundreds of rides.

Some charge fees to passengers, others do not charge request donations from passengers.

Some receive tax support, grant funding, or accept donations, others initiate fundraisers.

Volunteer Driver Programs

Some people think of volunteer driver programs as a new concept although they have been around for some time. In fact some have been around for more than 100 years. Ecumen Parmlly LifePoints of Chiscago City, Wisconsin began providing transportation in sleighs and wagons in 1905.

Today communities across the country are the home of volunteer driver programs. These generally are organized for a specific purpose or for one or several passenger groups. For example, many were originally started as transportation for older adults but have evolved as providers of transportation for other population groups, including people with disabilities.

Such programs are organized for a variety of reasons: an absence of available transportation services, the ability of volunteer drivers to provide physical and sometimes cognitive

assistance needed by some passengers; the potential to provide transportation at a low cost; and a reputation for limiting exposure to risk. Risk may impact on sponsors, passengers, for volunteer drivers, and for the community at large). In many instances, volunteer driver programs are organized to supplement existing transit services with available, affordable, and supportive transportation. An added feature is that their volunteer drivers can help link the program with the community they serve.

Quite often volunteer driver programs organize their service area to allow volunteer drivers to take passengers beyond city, county, and even state jurisdictional boundaries. They can be an especially important transportation option in rural areas where not only are distances considerable, but the probability of paid drivers having to make “dead head” rides” may be prohibitively expensive. The assistance provided by volunteer drivers and the value and relatively low cost of their services in rural areas are two of the major reasons many volunteer driver programs are located in rural communities across America.

Examples of Transportation Services

Public Transportation Service Tri Met-Portland, Oregon is a public agency that operates mass transit in a region that spans most of the Portland metropolitan area. Created in 1969 by the Oregon legislature the district replaced five private bus companies that operated in three counties. Tri Met started operating light rail system in 1986 and opened new lines in 1998, 2001, 2004, and 2009 (including a commuter rail line in 2009). It also operates the city of Portland-owned Portland Streetcar system. In addition to rail lines, Tri Met provides the region's bus system, as well as LIFT paratransit service and operates hundreds of buses on numerous routes. It offers “honored citizens” (people age 65+ with Medicare or a disability) rides for \$1.25 or day passes for \$2.50. <https://www.trimet.org/>

ADA Paratransit / Dial A Ride Pace ADA of Lake County Illinois is a complementary paratransit service, shared ride program in which other riders may be picked up or dropped off during a person's ride. Services are provided within 3/4 mile of local fixed routes and trips are only provided at the same times and within the same geographic areas as fixed route. Only persons who are certified by the Regional Transportation Authority as a person with a disability are eligible to ride the service.. Passengers call to reserve rides and reservations can be made one day prior to needing service. If the time requested is not available, the service provider has the ability to negotiate trip times and must offer a trip within one useful hour before or after the requested time. A trip is considered on time if the bus arrives within 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. <https://www.pacebus.com/>

Community Transportation Service Prairie Hills Transit, Spearfish, South Dakota is a non-profit corporation dedicated to providing public transportation for persons of all ages, including those who may require specialized transportation. With a service area of 12,500 square miles, it offers a service with direct pick-up and specific-destination delivery on clean, comfortable, handicap-accessible buses complete with seat belts and a calm atmosphere. In addition to medical trips, its drivers take riders to work, school, daycare, volunteer activities, and even social events. Its hours vary by town. It requires advance scheduling of at least a day's notice, and the service is affordable for riders – especially the elderly who ride by donation. By being integrated in communities as a regional transit provider, Prairie Hills Transit keeps seniors' costs lower by sharing resources. Prairie Hills Transit has grown from serving strictly senior citizens in Spearfish to providing transportation to students, elderly, individuals with disabilities and the general public in a service area of a dozen communities in six different counties. Prairie Hills Transit also operates a small volunteer driver program. <https://www.prairiehillstransit.com/>

Ride Share Programs Ridesharing is a form of transportation people participate in when they share a ride in a van pool or car pool, take a bus or train or any combination of these means instead of driving alone in order to reduce the number of single occupancy cars used by people to get to work by sharing their commute with other people. Uber is an example of a recently developed ride share programs which was developed in 2009 and now operates world wide. Originally Uber drivers used cars such as Cadillac Escalades but recently it has added a wider selection of cars to broaden its customer market. Rides are reserved by sending a text message or by using a mobile app. <https://www.uber.com/>

Volunteer Transportation Program Neighbor Ride - Columbia, Maryland. In the early 2000s, transportation was identified as one of the two main challenges faced by older adults in the county. Later, a work group was formed that collected the best practices for providing transportation services to older adults. These were matched with the characteristics and resources of the county, and the result was Neighbor Ride, which started operations in 2004. Neighbor Ride provides flexible daytime, evening and weekend rides to seniors. In 2016, Neighbor Ride provided 16,947 rides to Howard County seniors. <https://www.neighborride.org>