MAAS: Supporting and Changing Lives

A REPORT ON ENVIDA'S 2019 INNOVATIVE COORDINATED ACCESS AND MOBILITY (ICAM) GRANT

envida

Figure 1: Envida picks up a client in Teller County, Colorado

Contents

Executive Summary

In 2019 Envida was awarded a Federal Transit Administration Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility grant to expand transit services supporting behavioral health in Teller and Park counties, two rural counties adjacent to Envida's service area in El Paso County, Colorado. Funds were used to purchase vehicles and to hire drivers and a healthcare mobility manager to coordinate care with treatment providers and support agencies.

Statewide COVID-19 restrictions delayed the launch of new services and limited the participation of some planned partners. Nevertheless, Envida experienced consistent demand for transit services from the target population and others with limited transit options in Teller County. By networking in the community and building trust with clients and providers, Envida was able to provide 581 rides to, from or within Teller County, and reached 173.4% of the 13-month target of 335 rides.

More significantly, Envida implemented a sustainable service and, working with a variety of social service agencies and behavioral health providers, was able to fill a community need. Based on client surveys and comments from providers, Envida demonstrated that transportation does not have to be a barrier to improved behavioral health outcomes.

Introduction/Background

Envida's mission is to promote access and support independent living with dignity. A nonprofit serving Colorado Springs since 1971, our vision is to lead the nation in integrating services that connect people to community. We accomplish our mission through efforts that integrate homecare and transportation, which comprises specialized, demand-response, public, deviated-fixed, and on-demand services. Envida is located in El Paso County, Colorado, and 25 percent of our home and community-based services (HCBS) clients reside in Teller County, where we proposed this project to improve the coordination of non-emergency medical transportation.

Envida provides older adults, persons with behavioral and physical health disabilities, and those with low incomes specialized transportation with curbside, door-to-door, and through-the-door service delivered by safety-trained professional drivers.

With the expansion into rural El Paso County in 2018, we grew our service area from 195 square miles in Colorado Springs to much of El Paso County, which covers 2,158 square miles. Through this proposal, Envida further expanded into Teller County, which is a rural area of 559 square miles and just 42 people per square mile. Teller's county seat is Cripple Creek, and its most populous town is Woodland Park.

While not the most remote part of Colorado, Teller and Park counties are physically separated from Colorado Springs by Ute Pass, requiring about 25 minutes additional travel time for residents to access services in their neighboring metropolitan area. According to DataUSA, the 2019 median household income was $66,592 and the average daily commute was 29.8 minutes. Similarly in Park County, a recent report by Colorado Public Radio featured on NPR's *All Things Considered* described housing conditions described by Park County Sheriff Tom McGraw, "McGraw will tell you that attractive prospect

has led those with limited means from around the U.S. to buy these lots sight-unseen and move to the region with visions of homesteading their own small piece of the American West." (https://www.cpr.org/2021/10/22/park-county-colorado-housing/)

Given Envida's large geographic area of mobility service and the dearth of healthcare providers across El Paso County and Teller County, Envida has developed core competencies related to community
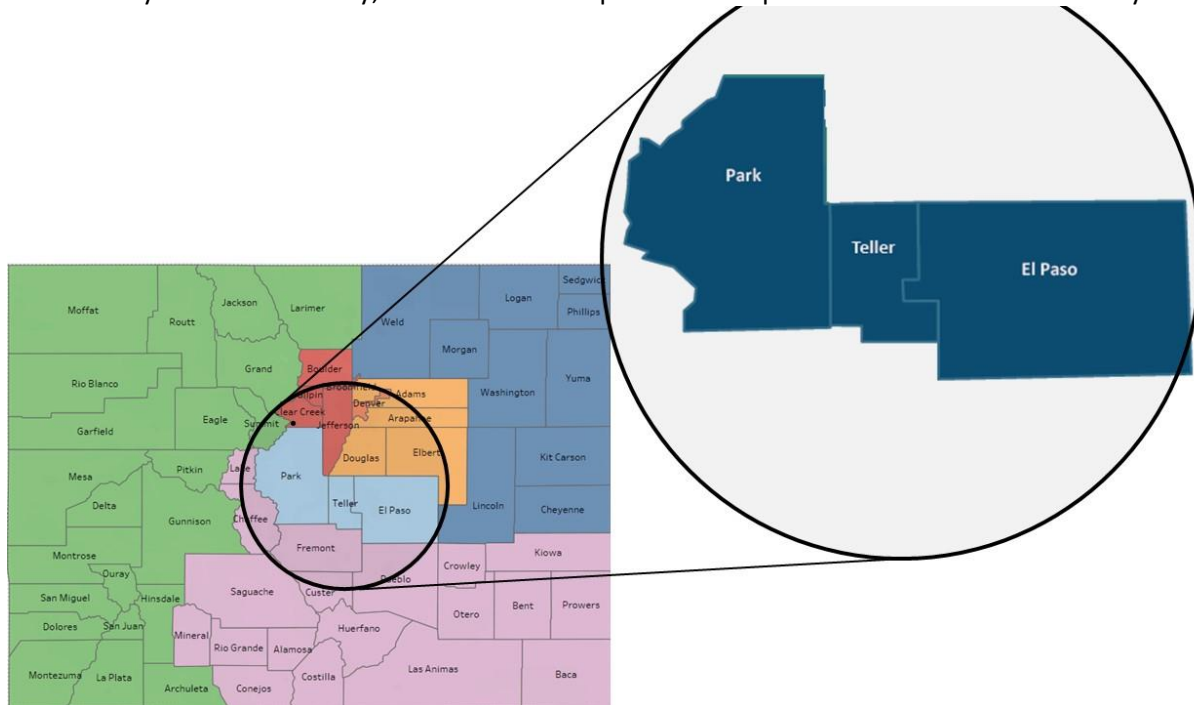

Figure 2: Envida now supports transit in El Paso, Teller and Park counties in Colorado.

healthcare to effectively link patient needs to appropriate services. We research options to meet needs with and on behalf of patients, and we act as liaison between mobility options and healthcare providers for non-emergency medical transportation services.

Project Description

MaaS: Changing and Saving Lives - Supporting Behavioral Health in Rural Colorado

Envida's proposed implementation was based on design-thinking research for the 2018 National Center on Mobility Management (NCMM) Health Care Access Design Challenge, which demonstrated that drivers with enhanced training in the needs of behavioral health clients, coupled with a facility portal for agencies to schedule individual and group appointments, could significantly improve mental health and substance abuse provider utilization and lower medical service costs. The stated goal was to implement both demand-response and Mobility on Demand/MaaS services serving residents of Teller and Park counties beyond Ute Pass west of Colorado Springs.

Envida sought partners in the community and implemented the RMMobility Platform from RouteMatch to offer riders an efficient and reliable travel experience through a single, comprehensive mobile application. RouteMatch's technology includes an agency or facility portal that supports on-demand services, intermodal or point-to-point trips, service zones, fleet assignments, scheduling parameters, and day-and-time configurations for service. This design was reflective of the growing reality that mobility is a more collaborative business in both urban and rural areas than individual agencies operating in geographically limited service areas. Using funds from the Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility grant:

Figure 3: Envida transports Teller County clients to services in Colorado Springs.

1. Envida deployed Mobility as a Service (MaaS) to integrate transportation technology, healthcare provider access, and mobility navigation;

2. Envida leveraged RouteMatch's RMMobility, a Mobility on Demand (MOD) product to deploy most appropriate transit service, i.e., sensitivity to diagnosis as well as least-cost transit solution.

3. Envida hired a community-based mobility healthcare manager who works with drivers, healthcare providers, partners, and riders to ease access, increase demand-responsiveness, and ensure riders secure most appropriate transportation for their needs.

4. Envida acquired two AWD passenger vehicles for mountainous rural routes to destigmatize transit for those with mental health and substance abuse disorders and enhance timely demand-responsiveness. These vehicles are lower cost than large body-on-chassis busses and provide greater flexibility for broader specialized transportation implementation.

5. Envida provided additional driver training in behavioral disorders, trauma-informed care, and NARCAN administration.

Envida was able to measure post-implementation data on number of rides, cancellations, and no shows, providing feedback to clients and case managers on the impact of missed appointments in behavioral health outcomes. Envida sought to gather data on outpatient care rides arranged in lieu of ambulance transit with a goal to extrapolate overall cost savings to the system.

Key Partnerships

Prior to applying for the ICAM grant, Envida sought and obtained support from a variety of key agencies and providers, including:

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- AspenPointe Behavioral Health (now Diversus Behavioral Health), one of the leading behavioral health providers in the Pikes Peak region, demonstrated the utility of a facility or provider portal allowing caregivers to directly request rides for individuals or groups.
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), in addition to managing federal pass-through funding, provided the initial transportation and transit improvement plans key to Envida identifying the need for additional services in Teller and Park counties.
- Cripple Creek Transit (CCT), one of the existing transit agencies within Teller County, was able to coordinate services with Envida as well as direct clients outside their fixed-route services to Envida for their transit needs.
- Peak View Behavioral Health is the largest behavioral health provider in Teller County.

Figure 4: Envida coordinates transit services with partners at the Aspen Mine Center in Cripple Creek, Colorado.

- Pikes Peak Regional Council of Governments (PPACG) is a voluntary organization comprising 16 counties and municipalities in the Pikes Peak region, allowing members to coordinate activities and identify opportunities across political boundaries. The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is also housed within PPACG.
- RouteMatch (now RouteMatch by Uber) provides client scheduling and route dispatching software to Envida. RouteMatch supported Envida's ICAM implementation with enhanced Mobility on Demand, facility portal and client support software for the project.
- Teller Senior Coalition (TSC) provides limited public, fixed route transit services as well as demand-response for seniors within Teller County.
- Ute Pass Regional Health Service District (UPRHSD) provides emergency and non-emergency medical and behavioral health transportation services in Woodland Park and portions of Teller County. Though UPRHSD was critical in demonstrating the need for a demand-response and on-demand service in Teller County, COVID-19 restrictions limited the number of rides that could be passed to Envida within the parameters of the initial service rollout (see COVID-19 Impacts below).

After planning and implementation were underway, Envida developed partnerships with additional agencies through which many additional clients were identified, including:

- Aspen Mine Consolidated Service Center in Cripple Creek hosts a variety of agencies providing services to individuals, families, and seniors within Teller County.
- Colorado Fourth Judicial District arranges transit services for individuals undergoing court-ordered substance use disorder (SUDS) treatments as well as other transportation needs.

- Joint Initiatives for Youth and Families (JI) is a collaborative nonprofit agency that leverages community resources and ensures integrated services and support for youth and their families with complex needs.
- Woodland Park School District has identified students who need transportation to counselling or other services that cannot be supported by the district's transportation department.

From the list of partners, it is clear Envida sought to collaborate with the widest possible range of agencies and providers already established in the target expansion area to reach new clients with a demonstrated need for access to services. An important factor in managing both partner and client relationships is the work of Envida's healthcare mobility manager hired with funds provided through the ICAM grant. Having a mobility manager on staff allowed Envida to track usage and work with the community to ensure that transit services were available when and where needed to support community needs.

Implementation

Figure 5: Envida operations team meets with Transit Manager from Cripple Creek Transit.

Envida launched Mobility on Demand and demand-response services in Teller and Park counties on September 18, 2020 with a single part-time driver and an all-wheel drive SUV suitable for the rougher roads and steeper terrain present in such a mountainous region. This service was soon expanded to two part-time drivers and is now served by one full-time and two part-time drivers. It includes an ADA-accessible vehicle for clients with physical limitations to ensure equivalent services.

While Envida's mobility manager worked extensively with provider and other agencies in the area to identify transit needs, actual rides were more dependent on the short-term or long-term needs of individual clients. That is, while those at the table are an important voice in determining what is needed, it is the person who is unlikely part of the initial discussion who actually inspires the solution and, therefore, the layout and capacity of the system as it is finally implemented.

Similarly, Envida quickly determined that the MOD and demand-response services that we could offer were useful in addressing community needs in Teller County, but neighboring Park County (population 17,390 within 2,194 square miles or just 7.4 ppsm) was too dispersed for those models to be effective at addressing community needs. Envida switched to supporting Medicaid's NEMT "friends and family" reimbursement program to allow neighbors or a family member to be paid for providing needed transportation for medical and behavioral health appointments.

Marketing

As part of the launch of a new service in a geographic region unfamiliar with transit service options in Colorado Springs, an effective marketing plan was critical to getting the word out to care providers, clients, and service coordinators. The team first established potential scenarios or target audiences to reach in priority order. These were reprioritized several times during the pandemic. Staff also attended local monthly group meetings (in person and virtually) and distributed ride information at events like the local farmers' market. The Healthcare Mobility Manger was effective in getting to know the providers services and matching them to client needs. By sharing about services at Teller County Behavioral Health Alliance and the Community of Caring meetings, Envida was able to saturate organizations with information about the new service.

Impacts of COVID-19

COVID-19 had a major impact on both the design and implementation of the final project. Based on coordination of activities with key stakeholders, the target implementation date for launching services in Teller County was originally set for May 15, 2020. In March 2020, COVID-19 cases began to multiply rapidly throughout Envida's targeted region. In one week, ridership in existing services dropped off by 70%. As service providers suspended services or implemented telehealth, it became clear that the initial design of the new service in Teller County was no longer appropriate for the changed circumstances. In addition to behavioral health and substance abuse providers, Envida had engaged with the Ute Pass Regional Health Services District (UPRHSD) to provide client transportation in non-emergency circumstances. Due to the decrease in demand for emergency services in the region as citizens sheltered in place, UPRHSD also experienced a lower demand for services, thereby reducing the need to shift rides to Envida.

At that point, Envida regrouped and reimagined how to provide effective services when planned partners were not providing onsite services or otherwise moving clients to appointments. Envida scaled back initial launch plans and reduced the target from two vehicles serving the area to one. A new launch date of September 18, 2020 was established.

Indeed, Envida recognized that targeted providers and institutions would no longer be able to provide sufficient demand to sustain Envida's services. For example, adult day programs and behavioral health group counselling were closed in Teller County for the first six to eight months after services were launched. Consequently, Envida used the unexpected available capacity to build the relationships necessary for a sustainable service. For example, in November 2020 when coordinated service providers at the Aspen Mine Center in Cripple Creek were unable to host their annual Thanksgiving basket give-away, Envida's driver volunteered to deliver holiday food baskets to those in need in the community with no means to receive their baskets. While the intent was altruistic, the result was an introduction to Aspen Mine Center staff and increased awareness of a new transportation option in the community.

Envida was also able to launch services throughout the original and expansion coverage areas specific to the meet community needs driven by COVID-19. We implemented a *Safe to Ride* program of enhanced

surface disinfection and additional space between drivers and passengers in all vehicles. In September 2020 Envida's *Safe to Ride* program was recognized with a Spotlight Award from Southwest Transit Agencies (SWTA).

When the City of Colorado Springs opened a homeless isolation shelter for those identified with COVID-19 symptoms on the street or in other shelters, Envida volunteered to provide transportation to those in need, including evenings and weekends beyond normal service hours. In the spring of 2021, when vaccines were becoming more widely available, Envida established a vaccination clinic transportation hotline, providing a single dedicated phone number to arrange transit services from numerous providers. That hotline was designed and in operation within 36 hours of the initial need identified by the El Paso County Department of Health.

While launching new transit services at a time providers and community services were restricted or suspended made Envida's planning and implementation more difficult, in the long run the required extra level of flexibility allowed more clients and prospective partners to learn about Envida and our transit solutions.

Performance Measures

Initially identified performance measures for the Teller County expansion were:

1. Number of NEMT Behavioral Health rides provided between Teller and El Paso counties
2. Number of NEMT Behavioral Health rides provided within Teller County
3. Number of no-shows from Teller County clients
4. Number of cancellations from Teller County clients
5. Participation in quarterly new client and new provider qualitative surveys
6. Participation in quarterly new client and new provider quantitative surveys
7. Reduced non-emergency responses by UPRHSD
8. Increased completion of behavioral health treatment plans

Due to a variety of barriers, including provider closures under pandemic restrictions noted above and negative client reaction to detailed quantitative surveys, Envida sought and was granted approval to modify performance measures during the grant reporting period. The final key success measures were:

1. Number of NEMT health services rides provided between Teller and El Paso counties
2. Number of NEMT health services rides provided within Teller County
3. Number of additional Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) rides to, from or within the Teller County service area
4. Number of no-shows from Teller County clients
5. Number of cancellations from Teller County clients
6. Number of new enrolled clients
7. Participation in quarterly new client qualitative surveys
8. Reduced non-emergency responses by UPRHSD
9. Increased access to care of behavioral health clients
10. Increased clients with improved outcomes

Outcomes

By the end of the grant period, Envida had exceeded all agreed-upon performance targets except for the total number of new enrolled clients.

From client survey data and individual interviews, Envida was able to confirm that rides were delivered in lieu of emergency services, but further research would be required and verification with hospitals before Envida would be able to confirm a total impact.

	Teller County Performance Measures (completed rides)	Target (Sep20 to Sep21)	Actual Current Month (Sep21)	Actual to Date (Sep20 to Sep21)	Percent Target to Date
1	Number of NEMT rides for health services delivered by Envida statewide to or from Teller County	95	29	132	138.9%
2	Number of NEMT rides for health services delivered by Envida within Teller County.	60	32	126	210.0%
3	Number of additional social determinants of health rides provided to, from or within the Teller County service area.	180	20	323	179.4%
	Total rides	**335**	**81**	**581**	**173.4%**

4	Limit no-shows to 10% of scheduled rides (To date=581)	34	0	7	1.2%
5	Limit cancellation to 15% of scheduled rides (To date=581)	50	0	37	6.4%
6	New enrolled clients	60	5	59	98.3%
7	Survey 25% of new clients (To date= 59)	15	5	30	196.7%

Table 1: Target and actual performance measures

NEMT rides for medical and behavioral health within Teller County rose from 21 in August 2021 to 32 in September 2021. After a sharp uptick in rides from Teller County to other destinations (primarily El Paso County) in August, those requests stabilized at 29, still a large increase over the single-digit numbers reported in prior months under the grant. Meanwhile, demand in the community increased with rides for social determinants of health, which over time became a larger percentage of overall rides than

NEMT. This shift occurred in large part due to medical facilities favoring telehealth over in-person appointments.
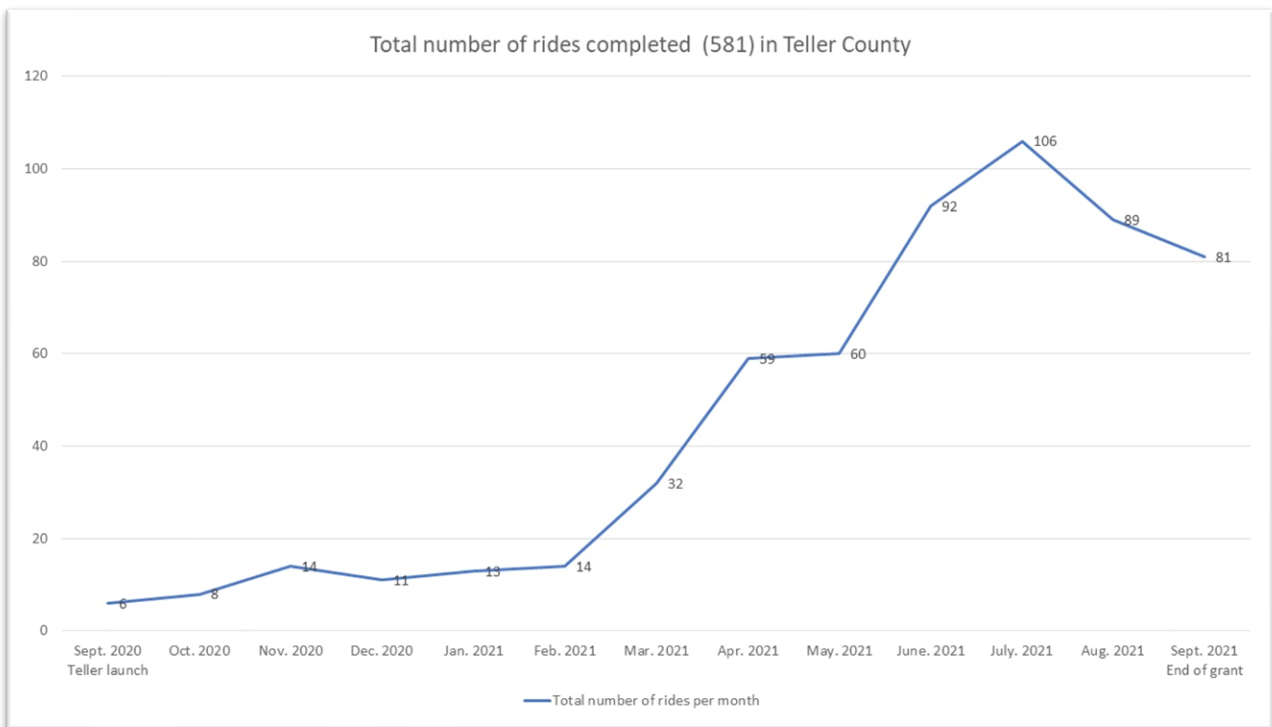

Figure 6:Total Rides by Month Provided thru ICAM funding

From surveys of new clients throughout the grant period, clients were very satisfied with services provided by Envida. In the final quarter, 69% of riders strongly agreed or agreed that their health outcomes improved since they began to access Envida transportation services; 90% strongly agreed or agreed their needs were being met, and 100% felt safe and respected when using Envida transportation services.

Envida was also able to document cases or outcomes where individual clients felt the transit services they received from Envida made a significant difference to their quality of life.

One new client in Woodland Park contacted us in March 2021 because she had an existing relationship with our driver. She needed access to oncology services not available to her in the Pikes Peak region, and through Envida was able to access her care provider in Aurora, Colorado, which is nearly two hours from her home. She shared the following with us:

"We have Teller Senior Coalition, which does a fantastic job for seniors, taking seniors to WP or the Springs for medical appointments, and is incredibly helpful in so many other ways as well. They've been a Godsend for me since I can no longer drive. Now there's Envida, which isn't in competition with TSC in any way, but provides additional services that help to round out real needs for people in Teller County-for the whole family. I was able to have transportation to an extremely critical appointment at the

Endocrinology Dept. at the University of Colorado Medical Center in Aurora, for which there's no source in the Springs. We're blessed to now have two service organizations in Teller County that can provide essential coverage for people with different needs. I wish them both the very best for their respective missions; everyone benefits."

In her survey response in June 2021, one new Teller County behavioral health rider noted, "*Envida is a god-send. Dependability, availability, flexibility, safety concerns all weigh strongly. As does the quality of personnel. Exceptional all 'round.*"

On September 16, Envida was presented the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA) award for Human Services Agency of the Year in recognition of best practices implemented by an organization that provided transportation services for the elderly and those with disabilities. The award citation included a quote from a staff member at the consolidated services Aspen Mine Center: *Give it to Envida. They solve problems.*

Moving Forward/Sustainability

Having completed NCCM's design-thinking training, piloted this innovative project, and measured outcomes, Envida was prepared to embrace that the work accomplished with ICAM would require sustainability. When the opportunity for an RTAP grant arose in May 2021, Envida recognized its applicability to its work in rural Colorado and saw opportunities to expand efforts for greater impact.

To bridge from the conclusion of the ICAM grant, Envida was also able to apply supplemental funding from a grant from Colorado Community Health Alliance, the Regional Accountable Entity (RAE). With the awarding of an RTAP grant in October 2021, just as ICAM neared completion, Envida strengthened its work by widening its reach to the larger Teller County community. This first step again requires coordination and cooperation with area transit providers and social service agencies, and it opens eligibility for rides to more participants. Envida continues its work particularly with Joint Initiatives, the Fourth Judicial District, Aspen Mine Center, UPRHSD, and Pikes Peak Regional Hospital in Woodland Park and Peak Vista Behavioral Health Center in Divide.

Cementing long-term relationships is another key to sustainable services. Envida is currently pursuing contracts for transportation with Diversus Behavioral Health and Joint Initiatives for Youth and Families.

Because RTAP is another time-sensitive grant, Envida has applied for 5311 funding to further sustain its efforts. We have also applied for and received 5304 funding to complete a transportation feasibility study over the next year for Park County, linking transportation services with surrounding counties like Teller, El Paso, Jefferson, Summit, Lake, Chaffee, and Fremont. Like Teller, Park County has an average elevation of more than 9,000 feet, and its residents tend to be older and isolated from critical services they need. Envida recognizes that for many of these rural mountain residents in Teller and Park, transportation access to Colorado Springs is figuratively and literally a lifeline.

Lessons Learned

Building trust with local clients and providers is the key to a successful service launch in a tight-knit rural community. Hiring drivers familiar with the local community is a critical commitment when expanding to a smaller client population where individuals are used to knowing the people they work with and those who provide them services. Key additional lessons or activities include:

1. Due to HIPPA restrictions, it is not possible to compare pre- and post-implementation outcomes for new clients or providers in a new service area.
2. Lower density in rural areas requires a modified approach to providing Mobility on Demand (MOD) services, or a blended service with both MOD and demand-response rides.
3. Branded vehicles are an important factor in building familiarity and trust in a service expansion area. Clients rely on the vehicle branding to know that this is the agency with which they have arranged a ride or that has provided services on a previous occasion.
4. Support of a Healthcare Mobility Manager or similar staff position was key to both developing relationships and improving outcomes for behavioral health clients.
5. The full 8-hour Behavioral Health First Aid (MHFA) or Trauma Informed Care training and

Figure 7: Envida transit team with CEO Gail Nehls

certification are not necessary in most cases for drivers to provide compassionate and empathetic service to behavioral health clients. Instead, Envida found it was sufficient to modify training materials to introduce possible behaviors and patterns, provide trauma-informed care and Narcan training and develop new procedures for drivers who could be 20-30 minutes from medical or other emergency services.
6. Alternatives to direct provision of services, such as Medicaid's NEMT reimbursement program for "Friends and Family," allowed Envida to support a less-populated community without the expense of supporting a driver and vehicle which might provide rides to just one or two clients per day.
7. You cannot plan for a pandemic, but you can be flexible in your approach and response to community needs. When Envida adopted a philosophy of trying to find a way to say "yes" to

atypical needs, the provider community responded such that new clients were assured that we would find a way to get them the rides they needed.

Results

Lack of transportation is often cited as a factor that limits successful completion of behavioral health service plans. Using funding from the Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility grant, Envida was able to successfully expand to an underserved area of Colorado and to reach a historically underserved population of behavioral health clients. While community needs and geographic limitations are different in every situation, Envida has demonstrated that actual and perceived barriers can be overcome, even during a pandemic, by a persistent team and a well-designed service plan.

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Appendix

Media coverage of Envida's ICAM grant and service expansion:

For more information please contact:

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FTA Awards Envida $250K for Innovative Transportation, June 5, 2019.
www.envidacares.org/media-and-press/
An Envida news release about the ICAM award.

A collaborative partnership gives Teller County access to mental health services and more, by Daniela Leon, *Fox21 News*, June 19, 2019
A TV news feature about Envida's ICAM award to support Teller County.

Teller County pilot program helps get people who need help on road to recovery, by Pat Hill, July 3, 2019, *Pikes Peak Courier*
A news article about Envida's ICAM grant and collaboration with other Teller transit agencies.

Envida Develops Transportation Program to Provide Mental Health Rides to Individuals Across Colorado Springs in Crisis Due to COVID-19, Sept. 10, 2020.
www.envidacares.org/media-and-press
An Envida news release referencing the ICAM award.

Nonprofit Envida expands transportation operations Teller County, by Pat Hill, *Pikes Peak Courier*, July 27, 2021.
https://gazette.com/pikespeakcourier/nonprofit-envida-transportation-operations-in-teller-county/article_5397d940-ea46-11eb-adb6-6b23a247a495.html

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