

Volunteer Driver Programs
During COVID-19
A Northern New England
Perspective

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Maine Council on Aging



- **100+ Organizations, businesses, municipalities**
- **Collaborating to ensure we can live healthy, engaged, lives as we age**
- **Core focus on transportation, housing, & care across all settings**
- **Hosts Tri-State Learning Collaborative on Aging**



TRI-STATE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE ON AGING

Tri-State Learning Collaborative on Aging

- Who:** Community, policy and organizational leaders
- What:** Facilitating cross-border conversations,
Cultivating new and innovative practices, and
Sharing successful community-based strategies
- Goal:** Increase the collective impact of “aging in place” initiatives through shared learning.

Volunteer Driver Programs

- Some VDPs are just starting; some have been operating for 20 years.
- Some are stand-alone programs; some are part of senior centers.
- Some have staff, some do not and are run on all volunteer effort.
- Geographically diverse, but most are serving rural communities.
- Some have age restrictions, some do not.
- Most provide rides for all purposes; some only to medical appointments.
- All rely on volunteers using their own vehicles and the volunteers are not compensated, even by mileage reimbursement.

Last Mile Options

Maine's 2025 Strategic Transit Plan which recognizes the need to strengthen and grow Maine's volunteer transportation networks.

- **72% of older Mainers "live in communities without access to fixed route transit or one of the larger flex route transit systems."**
- **The Plan "encourages the development and use of volunteer networks to serve rural and remote rural areas."**

COVID-19 – Resiliency & Recovery

- Two regional Zoom meetings; 1 month apart
- Recorded and available online
- 80+ participants from programs in ME, NH & VT
- Purpose to check in, share information, learn from one another
- Some continued medical rides; most stopped all operations, all were grappling with restarting service

Resources

- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/rideshare-drivers-for-hire.html> Avoid using the recirculated air option for the car's ventilation during passenger transport; use the car's vents to bring in fresh outside air and/or lower the vehicle windows.
- Operating Volunteer Driver Programs in a Pandemic: <http://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/Volunteer-Driver-Suggestions-COVID.pdf>

Resources

- CDC: *What Rideshare, Taxi, Limo, and other Passenger Drivers-for-Hire Need to Know about COVID-19* : <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/rideshare-drivers-for-hire.html>
- CDC: *Public Health Considerations for Reopening Mass Transit during the COVID-19 Pandemic*: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/MassTransit-DecisionTree.pdf>