



FTA's Access & Mobility Partnership: Mobility Management



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Executive Summary

Ride Connection is a regional community-based human services transportation provider, convener and partner located in Portland, Oregon. For this project, we partnered with Providence Health & Services, a major regional healthcare system, to provide mobility management services for multiple Providence locations. A Ride Connection Mobility Specialist collaborated with staff from Impact NW, a local social services provider, to provide individual travel options counseling and clinic-level support, integrating transportation referral processes into the existing systems. This project was established with a goal to increase access to preventative medical services through transportation, by enhancing collaboration between social services and healthcare systems.

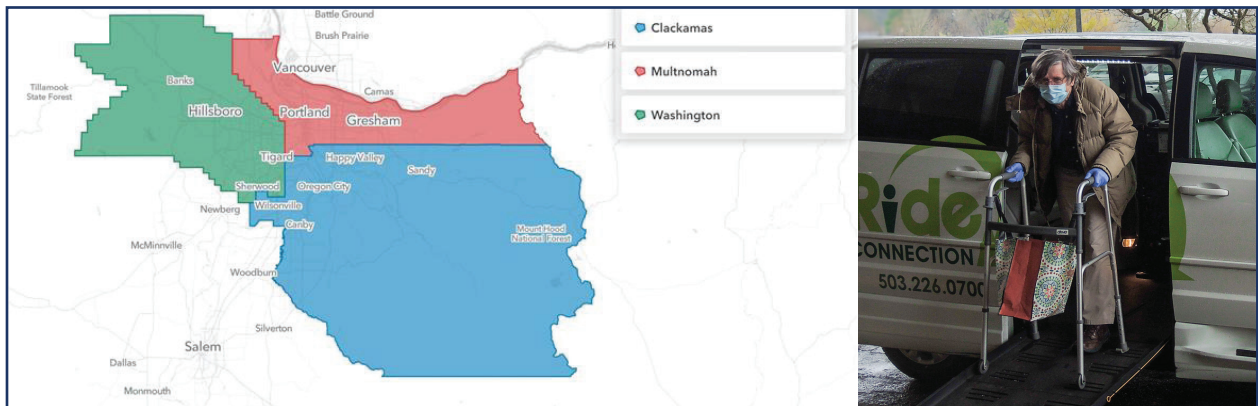
During the 21-month pilot program, Ride Connection's mobility specialist, working in partnership with Providence Health & Services and Impact NW, facilitated the provision of 3,505 rides and provided travel options counseling to 430 unique users. In addition to travel options counseling and clinic-level support, the mobility specialist worked with a cohort of 30 individuals to track the impact of safe, reliable transportation on their health outcomes. Of these individuals, 28 report positive health outcomes because of safe, reliable transportation. The success of this project far exceeded initial goals and as a result, target performance measures were increased midway through the pilot program. This report highlights the success, challenges, and outcomes of the project.



This project also launched the creation of Ride Connection's newest program, Mobility for Health. This program sustains the framework piloted through the Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility Grant and expands targeted services to historically marginalized communities. The Mobility for Health program breaks down barriers to transportation through strategic partnerships and collaboration, meeting the needs of each individual and improving their social determinants of health. Our mobility specialist team, now consisting of three staff, work in collaboration with community partners to identify barriers facing historically marginalized communities when accessing transportation. This information guides the implementation of strategies to enhance services for these individuals.

Background

Ride Connection is a non-profit organization that provides free transportation services to people with disabilities and older adults. In coordination with community partners, we provide customer-focused, safe, reliable transportation options for individuals in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties in the state of Oregon, which include urban, suburban, and rural areas. In the mid-1980s a citizen committee convened by the local transit authority TriMet recommended a volunteer program be created to better meet the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities. The first rides were given in 1986 as a TriMet pilot project. Ride Connection was then incorporated as a private nonprofit in May 1988 with a vision to serve this population with a more adaptable, accessible service than traditional public transit. The relationship between TriMet and Ride Connection represents a unique blending of public and private resources and serves as a model of effective regional cooperation and collaboration.



Ride Connection and our service partner network have evolved from a limited provider of volunteer transportation services to a major provider of transportation services, primarily for older adults and people with disabilities in the Tri-County area.

Mobility management services provided by Ride Connection include:

- Information and referral
- Network management and support of human service providers
- Fixed route travel training on the TriMet public transit system, and connecting transit systems
- Fleet management for the regional network of community-based transportation providers, and shared vehicle agreement facilitation
- Distribution of transit fare to qualifying low-income customers

Direct service provided by Ride Connection include:

- Door-to-door demand response transportation
- First and last mile community connector bus services
- Community-based shuttles for older adults and people with disabilities
- Veterans transportation services
- Volunteer mileage reimbursement

Introduction



Accessing health care is a regional challenge in the Portland Metropolitan area and surrounding rural areas of Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties in Oregon. Multiple health care systems have geographically dispersed hospital and clinic locations. As lower income households are displaced to the suburbs due to rising costs of central city housing, individuals must often travel longer distances to access preventative medical care. Current capacity of the Ride Connection Network of community-based transportation partners, serving older adults and people with disabilities, is inadequate to meet the need.

From July 2017 to June 2018 our community-based transportation network provided nearly 143,000 trips to medical appointments but had to turn down an additional 7,893 requests. Of the total completed medical trips, 8,478 were to Providence Health & Services locations. In addition to the completed trips, 1,788 trips to Providence, or 15% of the total requests, were unfulfilled. Providence locations are the most requested in the Ride Connection system, with Providence Professional Plaza in Northeast Portland being the most visited location.

Providence has established a system of Community Resource Desks to help individuals and families connect to resources in their community. For this project, Ride Connection implemented mobility management services to complement and support the Community Resource Desks when transportation needs were identified. Two locations were initially identified as high need where our mobility specialist would dedicate their time. While the mobility specialist was initially located on site, the onset of the global pandemic in March 2020 forced the transition of services to virtual.

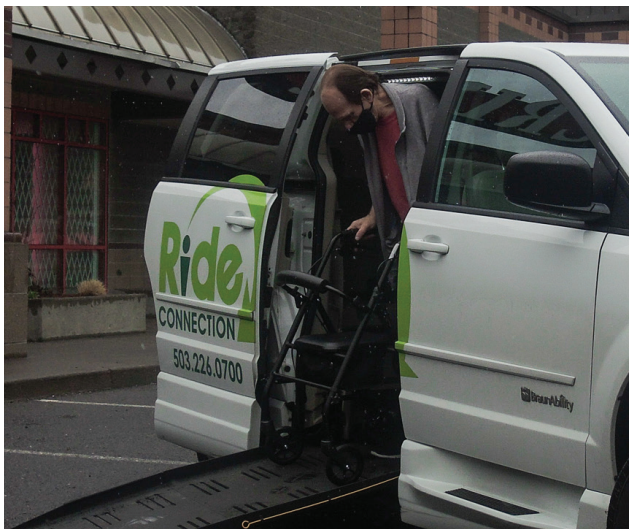
The services provided by our mobility specialist were needed to effectively group and share trips on the demand response system, connect individuals with public transit options when appropriate, and more effectively leverage the private transportation providers in the area. Clinic staff engagement is also essential to ensure there is an understanding of the role of transportation as a social determinant of health. Referrals of patients to mobility services can help achieve better health outcomes for patients and cost savings to clinics by reducing missed appointments. While the Community Resource Desks were showing success in connecting individuals to resources for food, housing, or rent and utility assistance, the rate for connection to transportation was lower, with only about 7% of individuals served being connected to transportation resources.

Project Description & Planning

In early 2017, Ride Connection convened an inclusive planning committee to develop strategies and recommendations addressing the significant number of medical trip turndowns in the Mid Multnomah County region. The committee was comprised of customers over the age of 60, younger customers with disabilities, demand-response transportation program coordinators, a Multnomah County Aging Disability & Veterans Services referral specialist, a volunteer driver, a Multnomah County Disability Services Advisory Committee Liaison and Senior Equity Planner, and two representatives from Providence Health & Services: a Discharge Coordinator and Program Manager.

Investigation of the data identified key destination locations that included Providence Professional Plaza. The committee recommended the implementation of a shuttle system to encourage customers to schedule their medical appointments on specific weekdays. The incentive for customers to choose these shuttle days to schedule their appointments was a guaranteed trip to Providence Professional Plaza. The shuttle was implemented in Oct 2017. Use of the shuttle initially gained momentum but plateaued in May 2018 after a few months of service.

As part of the process of evaluating the shuttle, we conducted a phone survey of customers traveling to and from the Mid-Multnomah County area to Providence Professional Plaza in June and July of 2018. An electronic survey of clinic managers was distributed by Providence via their email distribution list in July of 2018. The customer survey showed that of the 63 surveyed individuals, 24% would cancel their appointment if community-based transportation services were not available. Within the three-month period preceding the survey, 21% had canceled an appointment due to lack of transportation, 16% had skipped a scheduled treatment and 15% had chosen not to seek treatment at all. An additional 12% of respondents had to delay or not fill a prescription because of lack of transportation.



“Ride Connection has been so helpful getting to my medical appointments and picking up prescriptions. I am completely dependent on the service. I am legally blind and the driver’s help me out of the vehicle.”

The planning committee convened in June and October 2018 to review the survey findings and evaluate the medical shuttle service. The committee determined that the medical shuttle had not proven to be an effective transportation intervention, and that a different approach to transportation barriers was necessary. With additional input from Providence Health & Services staff, the recommendation was to move forward with on-site mobility management strategies to help reach more customers and coordinate more directly and consistently with clinic staff. Providence Professional Plaza was selected as the first site to build upon previous work, and Providence Hospital Milwaukie was selected as the second site because of the focus on providing services tailored to the needs of older adults.

This project enabled Ride Connection to implement the recommendations of the planning committee, with on-site mobility management services provided by a dedicated mobility specialist. A mobility specialist was hired to provide travel options counseling and connection to transportation resources for Providence Health & Services' patients, in collaboration with Impact NW when needed. The goal of the project was to improve access to the transportation system through mobility management services, for the purpose of improved health outcomes. The project was also intended to extend the established partnerships of Ride Connection, Providence, and Impact NW from exclusively door-to-door service to a wider menu of travel options. Mobility management activities include:

- Individualized travel options counseling that connects older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income persons with transportation resources to help them access healthcare services at Providence locations, and life activities that are social determinants of health.

- Location-specific travel needs analysis.

- Information and referral resources that support the Resource Desk system, documents the available public and private transportation resources, and evaluates their effectiveness in providing transportation based on attributes including Medicaid eligibility, geographic travel patterns and connectivity.

- Clinic-level relationship building, needs assessment, workflow analysis, and development of process recommendations to create successful referrals. Collaboration to establish processes to reduce missed appointment rates at clinics.

- Providence staff training for the mobility specialist in the use of the Providence Epic Electronic Medical Records system, to assist in patient referral processes and data gathering for evaluation of project outcomes. Epic is the most widely used Electronic Medical/Health Record system in hospitals in the US. This cross-training and policy documentation for mobility management use within the Epic system supports replicable uses across additional locations.

- Ability to provide immediate need, non-emergency transportation using available public and private transportation resources.

- Distribution of transit fare to include more individuals with incomes under 200% of the federal poverty line, integrating fare assistance with options counseling and referral to Ride Connection's fixed route travel training program.

Portable computers to allow the mobility specialist to conduct travel options counseling and work with clinicians throughout campus locations without being tied to a specific location. In addition, this allows the mobility specialist to access Ride Connection customer records, trip requests, and the scheduling system.

Services provided in both English and Spanish with options to provide additional languages through translation services.

Local match was required to apply for the Access and Mobility Partnership grant. Ride Connection was able to secure local match from two sources. The major portion of the local match was provided by in-kind match from Providence Health & Services for the use of Providence facilities, phones, internet, and computer equipment. These resources were planned to be utilized by the mobility specialist. A generous cash contribution was also secured to provide match from a private foundation, the Lamb-Baldwin Foundation, based in Portland, Oregon.



"Ride Connection has been helpful in getting groceries. I can take transit for some trips but it's too difficult trying to safely get groceries home on the bus and the cheaper grocery store is farther away from a bus stop. I'm able to go to Walmart which is more affordable than Safeway and I get more out of my food stamps this way."

Key Partnerships



Ride Connection's established partnerships with Providence Health & Services and Impact NW were vital to the implementation of this project.

We have partnered with Providence Health & Services since 2000 in a variety of ways. Ride Connection provides fleet vehicles to Providence ElderPlace, a nationally recognized Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE).

Since 2015, Ride Connection has received grant funding from Providence's Community Health Division to increase rides to medical appointments and more reliable access to health care by providing medical transportation for Providence patients. In 2018, the Community Health Division partnered with the Center for Outcomes Research and Education (CORE) to provide technical assistance to Ride Connection, developing our capacity to collect, analyze, and present data that is relevant and compelling to partners, funders, and other stakeholders.

Impact NW has been a Ride Connection partner since 2003. Their transportation services program serves seniors and people with disabilities residing within the TriMet service district, focusing on the Southeast Portland area. Clients request a ride via the transportation phone line and rides are scheduled and routed using Ride Connection's scheduling and dispatching system.

Implementation



Many factors impacted the implementation of this project. Initial delays were a result of the government shutdown in December 2018 to January 2019. Once past those delays, Ride Connection worked in collaboration with the Oregon Department of Transportation to receive the funds as a subrecipient. This process was needed because Ride Connection is not established as a direct recipient of federal funding.

The most significant impact on the implementation of this project resulted from the COVID-19 global pandemic. The proposed plan for the mobility specialist was to divide their time between the two high-demand Providence locations to provide on-site in-person mobility management services. This approach would allow them to facilitate relationships with customers, provide immediate travel options counseling, process ride requests and fare distribution, conduct on-site travel planning, and offer information and referral services. In addition, they planned to attend clinic staff meetings and to facilitate ongoing information sharing and collaboration with all Providence staff.

As soon as the pandemic began in early 2020, Ride Connection restructured services to follow guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), implementing social distancing protocols which required all non-driver staff members to work from home. We worked in collaboration with Providence to determine how to redesign the service plan to shift all activities to virtual.

Despite the pandemic, performance measures were established, and the mobility specialist began working collaboratively with the community resource desks throughout Providence and key Providence employees to provide the transportation services planned for this project.

The advisory committee composed of Ride Connection staff, service partners, and Providence staff that was originally established in 2017 was reconvened, and provided ongoing feedback for this project. They met quarterly throughout the project to discuss challenges, opportunities, and community engagement strategies possible during the pandemic. Their examination of customer feedback regarding our Ride Together mileage reimbursement program led to the successful restructure of this program, eliminating the training requirements that were a barrier to the service. The advisory committee was a valued element to this project, bringing together a diverse group of service providers to help guide many aspects of this project.

Performance Measures

The performance measures initially established for this project in July 2020 are as follows.

	Performance Measure	Target
1	Number of clients/patient interactions	500
2	Number of clinical staff and other stakeholder interactions	100
3	Number of transportation champions engaged with	10
4	Rides Provided	700
5	Completed surveys	100
6	Total members of cohort tracked	20
7	Number of cohort members with positive health outcomes	15
Targeted Outcome: 50% of patients referred successfully received transportation service from Ride Connection.		

The success of this project exceeded expectation and the timeline of the project was extended. As a result, the performance measures were increased in July 2021.

	Performance Measure	Target
1	Number of clients/patient interactions	500
2	Number of clinical staff and other stakeholder interactions	175
3	Number of transportation champions engaged with	25
4	Rides Provided	2,500
5	Completed surveys	150
6	Total members of cohort tracked	30
7	Number of cohort members with positive health outcomes	25
Targeted Outcome: 85% of patients referred successfully received transportation service from Ride Connection.		

Outcomes

Funding from the Federal Transit Administration provided essential transportation services to vulnerable individuals who needed access to social determinants of health including medical care, healthy food, and relief from social isolation. The project successfully served 430 individuals and provided 3,505 rides to customers. This pilot project was very successful and resulted in the establishment of a new Ride Connection mobility management program, Mobility for Health.



"I've been able to get to physical therapy which is important for being able to use my arm again. I've been so appreciative to be able to depend on the drivers. They have been so kind and friendly especially since I haven't been able to get out. I appreciate Ride Connection and I am so thankful. It's been a real blessing."

Despite challenges created by the global pandemic, the mobility specialist completed needs assessments and provided vital transportation services to individuals in need. Ride Connection met or exceed nearly all performance goals.

	Performance Measure	Target	Actual	% of Target
1	Number of clients/patient interactions	500	430	86%
2	Number of clinical staff and other stakeholder interactions	175	180	102%
3	Number of transportation champions engaged with	25	31	124%
4	Rides Provided	2500	3505	140%
5	Completed surveys	150	158	105%
6	Total members of cohort tracked	30	34	113%
7	Number of cohort members with positive health outcomes	25	29	116%

Outcome target:

85% of patients referred successfully received transportation service from Ride Connection.

Progress:

280 (65%) customers out of the 430 customers who have interacted with Ride Connection have successfully received transportation services from Ride Connection.



In addition to door-to-door services provided, new customers were also engaged with our travel training program to learn to ride public transit independently, our fare assistance program, and our mileage reimbursement program Ride Together. This program is a neighbor-helping-neighbor model where customers recruit their own drivers, often family members or friends.

Impact NW Staff Partner

“I work in the community resource desk program with Providence and am so grateful for our close collaboration with Ride Connection! It makes such a difference in the lives of my clients, and it’s pretty fast and easy for them to get signed up for transportation services, especially when I can refer them directly. It makes a difference when I know RC staff and can make a warm handoff. The mobility specialists are really responsive and informative and go the extra mile in reaching out and educating clients on how they can access the service.

I recently had a client who was recovering from surgery. They had lost a lot of income due to medical issues and hospitalization, and I was talking to them about saving money on food by visiting food pantries. We looked up some locations and schedules, but there was nothing in walking distance, and they couldn’t carry a heavy food box from the pantry to the bus stop and then carry it home. Besides the physical challenge that they weren’t up for, there was also the extra time that taking the bus to and from the pantry, and waiting at the pantry, would require. They were back at work on light duty and didn’t want to miss any more work, so having a visit to the food pantry take almost half their day really wasn’t an option even though they needed the food.

I consulted with our partners at Ride Connection and although this person wasn’t the typical RC client in age or ability, they were considered as temporarily living with a disability, due to their medical issues. I found a food pantry where my client could pre-order a food box so there would be a lot less waiting time, and the mobility specialist got them set up with a ride to and from the pantry. The client called me later that same day to let me know how happy she was with how everything worked out just as planned. The food resources made a real impact on her budget and her health, and it wouldn’t have happened without Ride Connection’s support.”

— Suzanna / Community Resource Specialist, Impact NW

Lessons Learned

Replicability

A primary goal for this project was to create a successful framework that is replicable. We have succeeded with this goal, and successfully replicated the framework with other partners and communities. Beginning with a needs assessment allowed us to learn from individuals and communities what barriers they are facing and services they need. This information guided the implementation and approach to service delivery. Collecting ongoing feedback ensures that we are providing the most appropriate services for the individual being served and supports continued process improvement for Ride Connection.

Trusted Partnerships

Establishing trusted relationships with clinic staff and ensuring they understood the importance of transportation when accessing medical services was also a primary goal for this project. Our mobility specialist successfully connected with 180 clinic staff and project stakeholders throughout this project. Several of these staff members now regularly refer patients to Ride Connection and successfully connect new customers to the transportation services they need to access care.

“I just want to provide feedback and kudos that Sarah has been a phenomenal addition to addressing transportation needs of our patients. The partnership of Ride Connection and Sarah’s integrated role within Providence has been the bridge between two systems, one that the health system often lacks to help make these connections more efficiently. I know Sarah will attest also to how often I connect with her on a daily/weekly basis. She has registered so many of our folks with Ride Connection and she has been so accessible through her role with Providence which has really eased the way. Sarah and I have made a great team with my role in connecting patients to resources and also aiding in ride coordination assistance to rehab visits. Between the two of us working together I can provide all of the accurate and needed details to getting our patients set up with their rides. With the frequency of transportation needs to patients receiving rehab it really has made it far easier having Sarah as a point of contact embedded within Providence.

THANK YOU for bringing her on and a BIG Kudos to you Sarah, you have been so helpful!”

— Liz / Patient Navigator, Providence Rehabilitation

Flexibility

While having a mobility specialist on site to provide face-to-face services was the planned approach to service delivery, we learned that providing services remotely was also effective. On-site service delivery was not an option during the global pandemic. Our mobility specialist transitioned service delivery and outreach efforts to staff to virtual. This transition made it vital for clinic staff to better understand the services available to their patients and how to connect them to services, as there was not an option to connect directly to patients. Our mobility specialist attended virtual staff meetings, distributed information via email and newsletters, worked in close collaboration with the resource desks and took every opportunity available to connect with clinic staff. This made it possible to connect with staff in multiple clinic locations and to target clinics serving patients that would likely benefit from Ride Connection services, such as cardiac rehabilitation and physical therapy. Due to the efficiencies and ease of communication through tools like Zoom and Microsoft Teams, working virtually was in some ways more beneficial than expected.

Collaboration

Transportation has not historically been considered as a barrier to accessing health care, or as a variable that is tied to health outcomes. Transportation must be included as part of a continuum with health care to enhance social determinants of health. Mobility for Health has introduced targeted solutions to these issues. Our mobility specialist has effectively bridged the gap between clinical staff and transportation providers by offering ongoing outreach and engagement on transportation options. With the mobility specialist as an advocate and resource, clinic staff understand how transportation is a social determinant of health, and likewise transportation can be provided with the wider health care context in mind.

Meet Marietta

In the middle of the chaos of the 2020 Thanksgiving holiday, Marietta, a Resource Navigator at Providence Health & Services, was urgently trying to find transportation to treatment for a patient recently diagnosed with cancer. Ride Connection's service partner, Metropolitan Family Service, had been able to provide most of the patient's trips to treatment appointments but was not going to be able to provide transportation for that particular Friday, as their office was closed for the holiday.

Ride Connection Mobility Specialist, Sarah jumped into action and spoke with the patient directly. This was a big relief to the customer who was understandably distracted and overwhelmed with the recent diagnosis. Sarah successfully scheduled transportation for this individual who then utilized Ride Connection's services for several additional months while waiting to receive Medicaid benefits. The Mobility for Health program was created for moments just like these; to help patients with critical life-sustaining trips and connect them to services that support their health and wellness.

Impacts of Covid-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on this project, creating both challenges and opportunities. The most significant challenge was that the pandemic was the sole focus for everyone world-wide for an extended period, particularly medical professionals. This created a challenging environment to implement a new project and build new relationships. The mobility specialist was patient and thoughtful with strategic outreach and communication. Having an established relationship with Providence prior to the start of this project combined with the flexibility provided by the FTA and Oregon Department of Transportation to extend the timeline made it possible to sustain this project under unprecedented circumstances.

Another significant challenge created by the pandemic was the inability to meet with patients and clinic staff in person. The proposed plan for the mobility specialist was to be on-site to engage with individuals in person, providing a variety of transportation resources. The social distancing guidelines made this plan not possible. In addition, preventative medical services were not the priority for many months and therefore the demand for Ride Connection's door-to-door transportation services significantly decreased.

In March 2020, as the impacts of the pandemic continued to increase with severity, Ride Connection staff worked to shift driver and vehicle capacity to support the needs of our region. During this time, our mobility specialist connected with the Providence Teaching Kitchen. The Providence Teaching Kitchen works to create a healthier community through one-on-one outpatient nutrition counseling, regular screening for food insecurity, and access to a navigator for individualized resources. The kitchen was unable to provide on-site or in person services, leaving many individuals who were dependent on this program for meals without access. The mobility specialist worked with the Teaching Kitchen staff to coordinate food box delivery to these individuals. Every week, the Teaching Kitchen staff would provide the information needed to the mobility specialist to schedule their delivery. Ride Connection drivers and vehicles would then pick up the food boxes from the Teaching Kitchen and deliver them to the recipients. This collaboration, that was established and implemented in a very short period, was possible because of this project. The mobility specialist managed this service for over a year and assisted with the coordination of 542 food box deliveries.

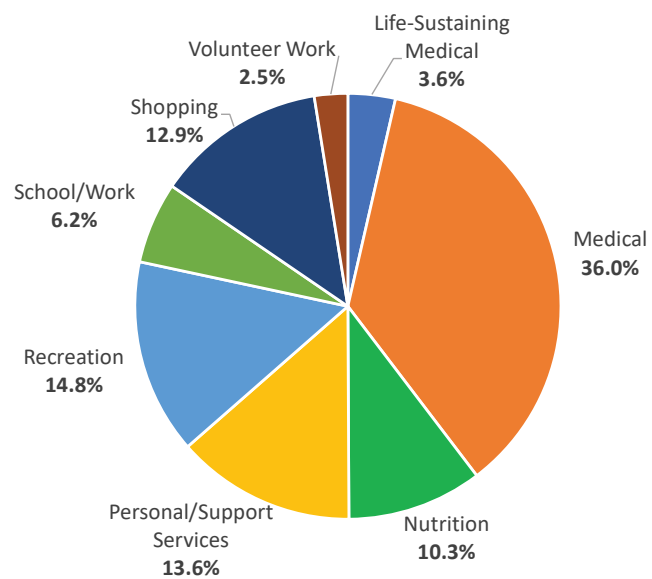


Ride Connection's collaboration with local food pantries expanded from our relationship with Providence and continued throughout the pandemic. In total, over 32,000 food box deliveries were provided by the Ride Connection Network.

Ride Connection restructured services to follow guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), implementing social distancing protocols and providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to all drivers and customers. We established cleaning procedures that also follow CDC guidelines and utilized emergency funding to purchase a fogging machine to increase cleaning capabilities for our vehicles. Ride Connection's ability to continue to provide transportation service throughout the pandemic was critical to our customers, many of whom were accessing life-sustaining medical services.

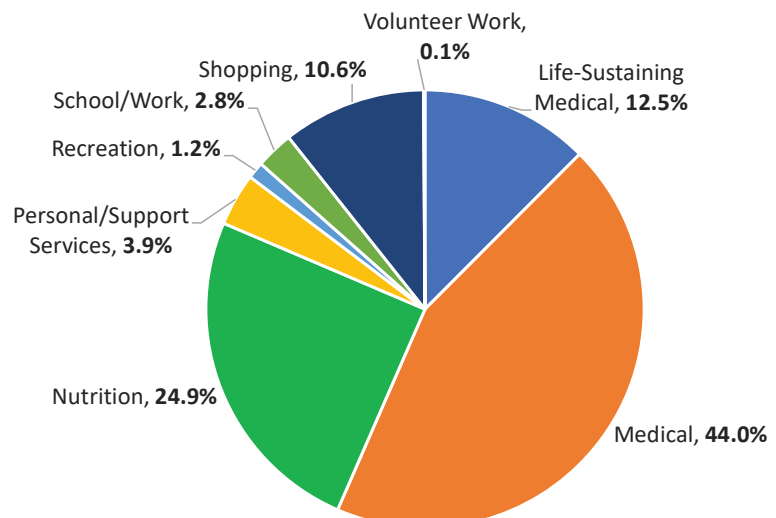
FY19 Total Trips by Trip Purpose

Tri-County
424,758 Completed
Trips
Excludes Public Shuttles



FY 21 Total Trips by Trip Purpose

Tri-County
154,886 Completed
Trips
*-Includes Food Box
Deliveries-
Excludes Public Shuttles*



Sustainability

This pilot project led to the establishment of the Mobility for Health program by funding the creation of a new staff position, the Mobility Specialist, to work in collaboration with our health-care partner, Providence Health & Services, to meet the goals of this project.

In addition to the work with Providence, Ride Connection received funding from Metro, the regional government for the Oregon portion of the Portland metropolitan area, to provide dedicated mobility management services for community partner organizations serving culturally specific populations. Our first partner in this effort was Centro Cultural de Washington County, the oldest culturally specific organization in Oregon serving Hispanic and Latino residents. This collaboration began with a needs assessment to guide the work being done to enhance transportation services to Centro's clients and the Latino community in Washington County. This collaborative approach to service delivery through the Mobility for Health program is flexible to address the unique needs of each partner and the population being served.

Funding from Metro also allowed Ride Connection to hire a third mobility specialist to work with the Portland region's Asian community. This mobility specialist is tri-lingual in English, Mandarin, and Japanese, and has been very effective in working with Cantonese and Vietnamese speakers, as well. Unlike the two other mobility specialists, this position is not embedded at a specific organization or clinic, and performs de-centralized outreach and travel-options counseling throughout the region at food pantries, culturally-specific organizations, and cultural events. This expansion of the Mobility for Health program has proven that the program is scalable and can dynamically build and leverage partnerships without having to be co-located at a partner site.

Meet Xueming

Xueming lives with her husband in an apartment building in downtown Portland. They live on a fixed income, so she is always looking for opportunities to save money. She mostly speaks Mandarin, and little English. Finding affordable resources for transportation and navigating her way around the city can be a challenge.

She learned about Ride Connection when our Mobility Specialist, Lu, was visiting a food bank Xueming visited. Lu speaks Mandarin and had Ride Connection services information in that language to share with Xueming. She learned about the reduced fare program from him, and signed up immediately. She uses her reduced fare to access medical care in a suburb of Portland, where her doctor is located who speaks Mandarin. She also uses it to get to the grocery store. Xueming loves that Ride Connection got her moving to where she wants to go affordably and feels like Ride Connection looks out for people like her, as her family would.



"I feel like Ride Connection is like a family, watching out for me and helping me. That is what I miss from my family in China, and I am finding it here."

- Xueming

Ride Connection is the coordinating entity for social service partners transportation funding in the Portland metropolitan region and plays a key role in facilitating the regional grant procurement processes for available State of Oregon Special Transportation Funds (STF), Federal Transit Administration 5310 funds and funding provided through TriMet. In addition, we can leverage funding from additional federal, state, regional, local and private funding sources. Establishing this project as an existing program, we can leverage a combination of public and private funding to sustain these vital services.

Ride Connection is dedicated to developing and maintaining stable and diverse revenue streams. This is crucial to the resilience and sustainability of our mission. Our Board, leadership and staff are focused on identifying and securing new revenue streams while maintaining and strengthening relationships with current funders, both public and private. This work includes advocating for publicly funded programs to continue, developing new opportunities for private funding, and approaching contract negotiations strategically to include margins.

Ride Connection recognizes the history of oppression, which has resulted in ongoing disparities based upon race, gender, perceived abilities, religion, culture, economic status, age, and more. We work to acknowledge and address these disparities by creating a culture of inclusion, respect, and authenticity. The Mobility for Health program is a leader in these efforts both within the organization and throughout the region. This work supports Ride Connection's diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility goals and the goals of the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon's Coordinated Transportation Plan for seniors and persons with disabilities. We are committed to the ongoing success of the Mobility for Health program and credit this pilot project, funded by the Federal Transit Administration, for its foundation.

Meet Gloria

Gloria is a Spanish speaking customer who was referred to Ride Connection by the organization Easter Seals. She has become a recurring customer and has utilized two of our transportation services: door-to-door service and travel training. Gloria has limited mobility and uses our door-to-door service when her trip is a long distance from home or in an unknown area; but she likes to retain her independence and will take public transit if she needs to go somewhere close or is familiar with the area. Gloria is a recent immigrant to the US, and she often depends on Ride Connection services for her transportation needs, as she doesn't yet know many people in the area that can help. Her budget is also very limited and being able to use Ride Connection's services free of charge gives her the ability to get to the places she needs to go without the financial worry.