



**TrustedRide**

CERTIFIED

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# FAQ

## TrustedRide: A New Approach to Providing Transportation Assistance

### Q&A from the webinar:

**Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut = Red, Ascension St. Agnes Health Institute = Blue, TrustedRide-Certified = Black**

**1. So, does the volunteer drive to the client's house to get on the transportation with them? Would it be possible to do this kind of program in conjunction with a volunteer transportation program?**

Yes, in fact in New Haven, the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut (AOASCC) partners with a volunteer transportation program which is funded by our office through a Title III grant.

Typically, for the Ascension Saint Agnes (ASA) program, the volunteer chaperone is provided a Lyft ride to the patient's home. And then they ride in the Lyft provided for the patient and chaperone the patient to the appointment. They may also drive their own car to the patient's home and park the car at the patient's home while they chaperone the patient in the patient's Lyft ride. We would then reimburse the volunteer for mileage. Yes, this could be a perfect fit for a volunteer transportation program as long as the transporter is willing to get out of the car and also escort the patient to the appointment. The one significant disadvantage to having only a driver is that the driver would need to park their vehicle and either leave the patient at the drop-off spot by themselves or would have to have the patient walk all the way from the parking lot.

The TRC Chaperone may get to the client's house by rideshare or their own transportation. The TRC Chaperone goes to the client's home after arranging a scheduled pickup or arranging an on-demand ride in most markets.

TrustedRide works well with volunteer driver programs, and would even enhance and grow the capacity of volunteer driver programs to serve more clients. ASA's answer amplifies the impact of the deployment of TrustedRide Chaperones. With a TRC Chaperone, a volunteer driver would never need to leave their vehicle or take the risk of leaving a client unattended for any period of time, and the client is assisted from door-to-door. By obviating the need for the driver to be in two places at once, the wheels can remain in motion and in service because a parked car is not going to get anyone anywhere fast.

**2. How much are chaperones/drivers paid per hour?**

AOASCC has an all volunteer program.

ASA's chaperones are volunteers, so no payment is required. There are many people who like the idea of helping older adults and persons with disabilities.

Current TRC Chaperones are unpaid volunteers. Drivers who provide their own cars are reimbursed at the current rate established by the TRC sponsoring agency.



**3. Are you creating this certification independently or are you sharing it with possible partners such as placement agencies or even NEMT contractors?**

The certification program is intended for, and available exclusively to, TRC Chaperones certified and supervised under the TRC Chaperone program. The certification is one piece of a multi-tiered process that includes background checks, outfitting, and management (including data collection and reporting), and is also linked TRC's customized scheduling software program and integrated with commercial and volunteer services.

**4. How would this work in a rural area?**

The volunteer model works well in the rural areas through neighbors helping neighbors. The volunteer isn't racing back to pick up another fare. They're prepared for a long ride and a full morning or afternoon with the senior.

This could be a great strategy for rural areas, however, the availability of LYFT or other ride-sharing services may not be available. For rural areas, consideration should be given to the driver as a chaperone model.

TRC is designed to be flexible and complement existing resources in each community. In all likelihood, a rural model would be based on transportation provided by volunteer drivers or paratransit, which increases the effectiveness of the TrustedRide Scheduler. TRC would provide training and technical assistance related to volunteer recruitment and other functions as needed. Individuals living in rural areas may find a TRC Chaperone can play a very useful role, particularly at a healthcare destination. The action of parking a car and at the same time assuring the safe and secure accompaniment to a doctor's office, away from a parking space, can be a challenge. A driver cannot be in two places at once, even if their point of origin is a rural area.

**5. Are the chaperones volunteers?**

The Chaperones at AOASCC are. We also have a little bit of staff time that we can use if there's someone who needs a chaperone and there isn't a volunteer who can fit into the schedule.

Yes, the Chaperones at ASA are all volunteers.

Under the current pilot programs, TRC Chaperones are unpaid volunteers. Should the model prove that the service will yield considerable savings to health care providers and payers (by virtue of reduced cancellations and hospital readmissions) the potential exists for a self-sustaining paid TRC Chaperone program.

**6. Is this service only for medical appointments? Could it be for work or recreation for adults with disabilities?**

AOASCC hasn't limited our thinking to only medical appointments, but in practice, the demand for medical chaperones has overtaken our ability to also provide social transport. It is something we are hoping to provide in the future.

No, this model could work for all types of appointments and events that older adults and persons with disabilities need to get to. This model is designed for those with disabilities as well, however, not for those with severe disabilities who are unable to walk without assistance.

Depending on local needs, TRC can provide Chaperone assistance to vulnerable individuals needing essential services, with priority given to non-emergency medical care. At the outset, the program was intended to support non-emergency medical transportation only. The coronavirus pandemic warranted modifications in the first operational year; with the hopeful end of the pandemic, we anticipate a spike in need for rescheduled procedures and hospital/outpatient discharges.



**7. What type of insurance requirement is required for volunteers? What if there was a fall or Injury that occurs?**

AOASCC insures all our volunteers with a standard issue insurance that indemnifies the agency. It's very low cost. In 43 years of volunteer programming we've never had to file a claim.

There's no specific insurance required of the volunteer. In most states volunteers are not covered by Workers' Compensation so volunteers should have their own health insurance in the event of an accident or injury.

TRC staff is available to provide guidance regarding options for volunteer insurance provided by the sponsoring agency. Comprehensive options are available at a reasonable cost to nonprofit organizations and government entities.

**8. How do you find volunteers to chaperone patients? Do volunteers need any qualifications or undergo a background check?**

All AOASCC volunteers have to have clean background checks. We don't have any "qualifications" for the program but the volunteer has to appear to have the ability to help someone navigate through complex facilities, be strong enough to provide assistance to a frail person, communicate clearly and have references attesting to their reliability.

At ASA, we have found volunteers through a variety of sources. Colleges and Universities often have programs where students are required to complete a practicum, i.e. nursing schools, community health programs, etc. Volunteer match services found online are another great resource, e.g. VolunteerMatch.com. Local religious organizations often have ministries devoted to helping the community and have at least one or two persons interested in helping.

TRC finds volunteers among a variety of people in many age groups; the requirements for a volunteer include being over age 18, physically well, able to assist others, and able to communicate and connect well with others. Recruitment options include outreach to senior centers and housing, community meetings, social media, and press coverage. TRC volunteers include seniors, students and people of other ages, all of whom share a motivation to devote time to assisting people in need of a Chaperone. The novelty of the program, and the absolute need for a Chaperone to fill existing gaps in communities, including the requirement for a "responsible adult", makes sense to TRC volunteers. Many have similar stories of family, self or friends who suffered because there had been no one to call, or had difficulty accessing essential transportation.

**9. What kind of training, if any, is provided to the volunteers? Is liability less of a concern because the volunteer is not doing the driving?**

AOASCC takes training seriously. We find it's key to establishing a good relationship and ensuring people are really prepared for the tasks at hand. We have an agency protocol that we use with all volunteers that takes them through an understanding of our agency, risks, responsibilities, confidentiality, HIPPA, etc. Then for the Chaperone program we utilized materials from TRC and created a program specific training that included How to Use Ride Scheduler, complete surveys, use scripts etc. Vaccine Buddies

The ASA volunteers go through the hospital's typical onboarding training that includes standard introduction to the hospital environment. The volunteers also undertake the Trusted Ride Certified training, training from non-profits on services available for the patient and other training activities related to older adults as speakers and hot topics come up. We certainly had greater support of this pilot project because the chaperones would not be driving the patients. There are volunteer driver programs for older adults in and around our community that are able to provide safe transportation. We hope to be able to expand to driver service in the future.



**10. Talk more about the provided training: 1) how long is the course, 2) if the final exam is not passed can the course be re-taken and if so, is there a time or re-test limit, 3) are there continuing education or recertification requirements?**

The TRC Chaperone training is completely online, and intended to supplement volunteer training protocols in place by the local program volunteer managers. Component subject matter areas include: an overview of TRC Services; procedures for COVID-19 including CDC guidance; general safety overview; types of transportation utilized with TRC services and how that defines the Chaperone's role; tips for serving as a TRC Chaperone, which includes guidance for needs specific to older individuals and those with disabilities; how to handle medical emergencies; HIPAA and confidentiality; elder abuse and mandated reporting; and content specific for Chaperones who have received professional medical training. In the same way that TRC is an ancillary service to transportation providers, the TRC Chaperone training modules supplement existing volunteer training with specialized training unique to the needs and responsibilities of TRC Chaperones. The online training can be completed in less than one hour, is continually updated, and can be accessed even after taking the exam.

If the final exam is not passed, a candidate may retake the exam until passed. However, as with all prospects who wish to serve, the volunteer manager retains the discretion to permit entry into TRC Chaperone service.

Each TRC Chaperone receives a certificate of completion after passing the exam; email notification is simultaneously emailed to the volunteer manager (and anyone else requested); and a record of each individual/score/date is stored in a cloud-based TRC file that is unique to that specific project location and accessible only by designated staff from that project.

**11. Is there grant funding available for this Program?**

Yes, AOASCC has a grant and is looking at multiple other sources to create sustainability.

Yes, the ASA program was started under the grant funding available through the Community Care Corps. grant program.

Grant funding may be available through a number of federal, state, and local government sources and philanthropic grantmakers in the areas of transit, aging, national service and health disciplines. TrustedRide-Certified will work with any qualified nonprofit or public entity to identify and secure funding to stand up a TrustedRide program. In time, the expectation is that the initiative will fund itself from health care savings that accrue through the delivery of TRC Chaperone services.

**12. Are volunteers allowed to be "hands on" if the senior is frail and unable to stand unassisted etc. If yes, what type of training is provided to protect safety of volunteer and senior?**

AOASCC administers a Senior Companion Program and we use the same training and guidelines for assisting clients. Chaperones, like companions, are NOT aides, but they can certainly offer an arm to lean on, or a hand to help carry a walker.

For ASA, our volunteers can provide light assistance as needed, but we are primarily serving older adults who can generally walk without much assistance. The Trusted Ride Certified training course provides some basic information on assisting persons.

Clients accessing TRC Chaperone services are expected to be ambulatory but may need the assistance of a cane, walker, or other utility to assure their stability in transit. TRC training includes guidelines for assisting vulnerable clients and can be amended for any agency that targets specific clientele; for example, the addition of Mental Health First Aid training for a program that requests it.



**13. In both programs, who is providing dispatch for the transportation itself?**

AOASCC subcontracts with a volunteer based transportation program.

For ASA, we have a system that allows volunteers to go into the system and schedule themselves or one of the two paid program staff can make the assignment in the system for the volunteer. Our program staff must load the patient appointments into the Ride Scheduler system.

In instances where rideshare vendors (Lyft, Uber) or taxis are providing vehicles and drivers, dispatch is done through the rideshare and taxicab software established by the vendor. In the case of volunteer drivers, TrustedRide-Certified's customized Chaperone Ride Scheduler software integrates driver and Chaperone data and dispatches the escorted ride. In all instances, the local volunteer coordinator has the capacity to override the software where warranted.

**14. Are you using Lyft Concierge? Pre-scheduled rides?**

Yes, ASA is using Lyft Concierge. Ascension has a national contract with Lyft. We do pre-scheduled and flex link rides.

**15. Are the volunteers good about showing up to the important medical appointments?**

Thus far no problems. Our volunteers are mature, sought out this activity and are motivated.

Generally, yes. If a volunteer has to back out at the last minute, one of our 2 program staff is available to quickly fill-in.

In TRC's experience to date, TRC Chaperone volunteers have had a great record with on-time support for all inbound and outbound facilitated rides to medical appointments.

**16. Can the Ridescheduler be used in a 15-county rural mountainous region?**

I don't know the answer to that. We didn't design RideScheduler, we just use it. We use it countywide in a 20 town region.

Yes, the TrustedRide Scheduler will work in a 15-county rural mountainous region, and TRC staff looks forward to working with the agency that submitted this question to identify any possible enhancements. TRC is working to implement the 'lessons learned' from year one and modify the TrustedRide Scheduler service to best serve the needs of local projects. TRC's goal is to expand the flexibility of the Scheduler to best support the existing configuration of resources in local communities. The TrustedRide toScheduler has the capacity to aggregate data for reports based on an extensive array of data points which will assist in local efforts to 'tell your agency's story'.

**17. Also, does TrustedRide provide help to contractees? We are a small center that has a large area to serve.**

TrustedRide-Certified provides on-demand assistance to interested service providers in addition to the online training offered for agency staff, available as soon as MOUs are signed, as well as on-demand training for TRC Chaperones. In addition, TRC schedules regular check-in calls with each site and monthly networking calls to share promising practices on relevant topics including volunteer recruitment/retention, social media and community outreach, ways to transition following the pandemic, and data collection.



If you have additional questions or would like to discuss how TRC can work with your community, please contact us at [info@trustedridecertified.com](mailto:info@trustedridecertified.com).