

NADTC Human Services Transportation Course: Session 1

*\*More information from Cindy Zwart and the efforts of Sound Generations will be provided in Sessions 2 and 3.*

**A conversation with Cindy Zwart, Sound Generations, King County, WA**

 

1. Provide us with an introduction to your work and how many years you been working on transportation issues in King County.

My name is Cindy Zwart and I’m Director of Sound Generations’ Transportation Program. I’ve managed the program for over 26 years, though I actually started out as a volunteer driver and know from first-hand experience the dramatic impact our service has on the many King County seniors and people with disabilities who depend upon us to get to life sustaining and life enriching activities.

We coordinate a network of over 400 volunteer drivers, employ over 50 paid staff, operate thirty-eight community vans, and provide information and referral for other mobility options with a budget of a little over $3 million. In 2015 we served 5,697 clients (unduplicated count), provided 147,878 one-way trips and 995,284 miles. We received the Beverly Foundation Star of Excellence Award in 2011 and the Washington State Association of Senior Center’s Service Recognition Award in 2013.

1. Tell us a little bit about your community and the population that resides in the region.

King County, Washington covers 2,134 square miles including urban, suburban and rural areas and is home to more than two million people. 11% of the population is 65 years of age and older; 10% have a disability; 23% are low-income. In addition, we are quite diverse. Over 400,000 immigrants and refugees currently reside in King County. One quarter of King County residents speak a language other than English at home. Consequently there is a great demand for specialized transportation options to meet their unique needs.

1. Can you tell us about the array of transportations services that Sound Generations provides?

Our Transportation Program has enjoyed success in all areas of King County since 1975. We are an established, well-respected member of the transportation community and are recognized by government agencies, municipalities, and other human services providers as a successful, reliable, replicable and cost-effective alternative to public transportation. The Transportation Program has been responsible for bringing together many different agencies and stakeholders to improve transportation for King County seniors and people with disabilities, including the local Area Agency on Aging, suburban cities, the King County Aging Program, King County Housing Authority, King County’s public transit agency, senior centers and agencies serving refugee, immigrant and limited English speaking populations. There are two program components: Volunteer Transportation and the Hyde Shuttles.

Volunteer Transportation has been around the longest, in operation since 1975, and is the largest volunteer driver program in King County. We grew out of a countywide network of agencies and individuals in an effort to centralize transportation services and to provide consistency and equal accessibility for area seniors. We have over 400 volunteer drivers who utilize their own vehicles to transport seniors 60 years and older to their medical appointments. What makes us different from buses, taxies and paratransit vans is that our volunteer drivers escort seniors to and wait with them at their appointments, providing not only a ride but a helping hand, friendly conversation and moral support.

*\*\*In the Session 2 Materials, you will receive more information from Cindy about the partnerships that help maximize funding and ensure effective delivery of transportation services in the region*

Contact Information
If anyone has any questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact me at:

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