

## **Addison County Older Adults and People with Disabilities (O&D) Committee Quarterly Meeting Agenda**

*October 24, 2023*

The Addison County O&D Committee provides oversight and guidance for Tri-Valley Transit's programs to assist older adults and persons with disabilities in Addison County. Programs supported by the committee get users out of their homes to medical appointments, to local adult day-care, to senior meal sites and for essential shopping. These services supplement regular transit services in the area, filling in gaps left by programs like Medicaid.

### **Attendees:**

Mary Claire Crogan (TVT), Connie Trudeau (ACHHH), Bill Cunningham (TVT), Dan Currier (VTrans), Jim Moulton (TVT), Ingrid Pixley (CSAC), Stephanie Stearns (TVT), Mike Winslow (ACRPC)

### **Agenda:**

1. Amendments to the Agenda - none
2. TVT Policy Input
  - a. Personal Trip Limits (allowable number and purposes). Clients are limited to six trips per month. Priority is given to critical care; personal trips are allowed, but are lower priority. Questions have arisen as to the value of some personal trips and whether TVT should be able to limit frivolous trips. At the Orange Northern Windsor O&D meeting a week ago, the group decided existing guidance on priorities worked, and no changes were necessary. TVT should not be put in the position of having to decide what counts as a legitimate personal trip and what is frivolous. Instead, TVT may adjust the overall limit of allowed trips if demand becomes too challenging to fulfill, but they would not change restrictions on the types of trips. Connie and Ingrid thought the approach worked. Volunteer driver recruitment is still a limitation. Based on feedback from Ingrid, Jim suggested probing clients needs on medical appointments and ability to reschedule.
  - b. Other items on agenda all have an impact on overall O&D cost.
    - i. Counting Linked Trips (one or multiple). There is an overall reduction in costs if trips can be combined in this way.
    - ii. O&D Rider on Bus Routes (under what conditions/exemptions). TVT wants to encourage riders to use buses when possible. TVT will ask dispatchers to encourage bus use, as bus trips are unlimited compared to O&D trips. Ingrid offered the example of a client on a bus route who was

told he can't ride the bus if he gets Medicaid rides. Stephanie explained how that could have been lost in translation, but the client can take the local bus.

- iii. Personal Choice Drivers - TVT has been exploring the possibilities of providing reimbursement for personal acquaintances of clients who provide rides. Dispatchers have been asked to remind riders that acquaintances can drive in a pinch but shouldn't be the ride of first choice because it can create pressure on the driver. TVT will offer friends a mileage reimbursement if they're willing to go through the on-boarding and background checks (i.e. driving record, criminal background). In such situations, the driver can set limitations on what services they will provide and limit it to certain clients. Drivers will receive reimbursement and supplemental insurance. TVT suggested service providers let their clients know of this option. The additional drivers will help the system as a whole by freeing other drivers, and could serve as a recruiting tool for new drivers. Connie asked if friend drivers would still fall under 6-rides per client - answer yes. Ingrid asked about the time frame for background checks. TVT replied that checks have taken 2-3 weeks, but the length depends on the capacity at DMV. Additional complications ensue if the driver has not been a Vermont resident for long as that requires background checks in other states which can be more difficult to coordinate, depending on the state.
- c. Group Trip Requests - Jim walked through a decision tree developed by TVT to determine what trips are possible under E&D funding or other funding. This is a tool for service providers to self-screen and estimate cost share. Ingrid asked what constitutes a group. Jim suggested enough people to require a bus rather than a volunteer driver (4+). Staff accompaniment could be included in that number, as they would be considered personal care attendants or aides. The biggest barrier to providing group trips now is TVT capacity. They typically only receive requests for one or two trips per month. TVT will look to accommodate requests as best they can, but will come back to the committee if they reach their capacity and find one service entity dominates the requests.
  - i. Ingrid asked about transportation back and forth between Evergreen House and Robinson House. Mary Claire noted these would be regular Medicaid rides. Cost share is a possibility for clients with Medicaid spend-down issues, if the trips are shared, but costs will vary depending on how many people share the ride.

- d. Microtransit - Purchase orders for four vehicles to be deployed for the service have been submitted. Two are low-floor 8-seat gas engine vehicles which are easier for wheelchairs and accessible by those with limited mobility . The other two are 8-seat electric vans, which will be TVT's first foray into electric vehicles. The service footprint and software provider have been finalized. Mary Claire shared a map of service boundaries which are bound by lower Foote St. in the south and ACHHH to the north. The Service area Includes the college and the Shaws complex to the East and West. Fixed route service area has been modified as a result. Microtransit will operate Monday to Friday from 7am to 6pm. Microtransit should increase available service for O&D clients, because use of the service does not count against the six trip limit. Two vans will run in tandem all day in addition to the fixed route service. Users can anticipate pick up within five minutes of the ride request. TVT is having a custom app built to accommodate riders.
  - i. Mary Claire asked Ingrid for updates on groups serving the cognitively impaired as she wants to try and ease transition anxiety. One service entity, Community Bridges, is active and Ingrid will seek out others.
3. Partner Roundtable - a chance to share useful insights about the programs
  - a. VTrans - Dan Currier - VTrans is hiring a consultant to conduct an O&D survey with an anticipated January start. He asked to have an item added to the agenda for the next meeting (in January) to discuss the survey.
  - b. TVT - no additional updates
  - c. Age Well - not present
  - d. CSAC - no updates. Things are going well
  - e. ACHHH - Connie reported that case managers are very pleased with services being provided.
4. Other Business - none

Next Meeting January 16, 2024 2PM



# Group Trip Request Flow Chart

## Can TVT provide an organization with group transportation?

