



OPERATING TRIP MODEL SERVICES, SEPTEMBER 2015

What to Expect When You Start a TRIP Program?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Performance data from six programs that have adopted the TRIP Model and started similar services in four different geographical areas of California and two services from other states was gathered in September to evaluate the success of the new services. Four of the programs began providing rides in 2011, one in 2013 and one in early 2014. The service areas of the programs vary from cities, to small towns, to rural locations. All of the programs have a service area from several to many cities or town to entire counties. All of the services believe their decision to use the TRIP Model as the basis for their program to have been a good decision.

During the month of September 2015, the programs together reported providing 7,410 one-way free trips for 565 unduplicated elderly and disabled riders at an average cost per ride of \$5.52 and an \$.80 per mile subsidy cost. In all cases, the cost of mileage reimbursement was approximately 50% of the cost of operating the program. The program that provided 3,888 one-way trips for 184 unique reported a total monthly expense to their organization of about \$20,000. The average cost for each of the other programs was about \$5,000 for the month, with about 50% of the expense being mileage reimbursement payments for volunteer drivers.

Funding for five of the programs has primarily been provided through Federal Grants and the programs continue to rely on Federal funds for operation. In addition, the operating programs are using Foundation Grants, public donations, and enterprise activities to augment Federal Grants. One of the programs is supported by local transportation funds. Four of the six programs shared plans to grow service capacity by again as many or more riders as currently served in the next year and are looking toward fundraising.

INTRODUCTION

The TRIP Program of the Independent Living Partnership has been successfully providing volunteer driver rides for low-income, alone, elderly and disabled residents of Riverside County California since 1993. The success of TRIP for Riverside County has inspired non-profits and other agencies throughout the state and in other places across the country.

TRIP's innovative, rider-centered design was suggested by participants in focus groups and fleshed out into its earliest form through a collaborative effort of planners from the Riverside County Transportation Commission and the Riverside County Office on Aging. The responsibility for implementation of the revolutionary transportation program was given to a small area nonprofit.

Introduction of the service that targeted older adults, disabled individuals and particularly those with low income began slowly and participation in the program was very gradual as outreach to social and health service providers offered a transportation solution to get their transit dependent and otherwise unserved clients to critical living resources.

After more than twenty years TRIP in Riverside County is now a robust and mature volunteer driver service with a track record of success in providing transportation to those who are the most challenging to serve at about one-third the cost of public demand-response services or volunteer centered volunteer driver programs.

Soon after the San Bernardino County Department of Aging and Adult Services learned of the TRIP Program in their neighboring county, they began a similar but small service which has continued to operate now for over twenty years. By the year 2000, TRIP began to gain national interest through profiling of the exciting new approach to providing low-cost and effective aging and disability transportation by contributors to the Transportation Research Board, the Beverly Foundation and others.

Since then there have been spontaneous adaptations around the country; some succeeded and others did not. Now the Independent Living Partnership (ILP), parent of TRIP, has assumed responsibility to assist other organizations to start and successfully operate TRIP services in other cities, counties and states. While ILP does not operate these services directly, start-up training and virtual private network access to special software is provided to insure the best possible chance that the programs will be successful. The ultimate success of any service program is dependent on a number of variables:

1. Organizational commitment
2. Quality of leadership and management
3. Staff skills
4. Ability to achieve stakeholder engagement
5. Ability to secure ongoing funding.

Established TRIP model programs are now being operated in a variety of organizational environments: nonprofits, government agencies and transit agencies. Several operating programs from a variety of operating and geographical environments were selected to

participate in the September survey. The data in this report was gathered from six (6) operating services: four in California, one in Michigan and one in Massachusetts. TRIP Riverside performance data is not included. Data from the following operating services is included:

- Community Connections, Community Senior Services, Claremont CA
Started 2011
- TRIP Metro North, Mystic Valley Elder Services, Malden MA
Started 2011
- Freedom Road, Freedom Road Transportation, Orion, MI
Started 2011
- SAFE Transport And Reimbursement program (STAR), San Raphael, CA
Started 2011
- Tuolumne TRIP, Tuolumne County Transit, Sonora, CA
Started 2013
- Ventura County Catch-a-Ride, Mobility Management Partners, Camarillo, CA
Started 2014

Questions included the nature and size of service areas, performance measures, service costs, program efficiency, divergence from the TRIP model, present sources of funding and future funding plans, and satisfaction with their choice to operate a TRIP Model service.

SURVEY RESULTS

1. The service area for all was more than a single town or city with half indicating full county service; one organization serves an area that is primarily rural, two serve an area that is primarily towns and cities and three serve a mixture of areas.
2. The programs together reported providing trips for a total of 565 unique riders per month; average per program was 81 riders in September; highest was 184 riders.
3. The programs together reported providing 7,410 one-way trips per month, or an average of 13 one-way trips per rider; highest was 3,888 one-way trips. Average length of a one-way trip was about 10 miles.
4. One of the programs provided 3,888 one-way trips for 184 unique riders in September and reported total monthly expense of about \$20,000 with 50% of that cost going into mileage reimbursement payments for volunteer drivers. The average cost for each of the other programs was about \$5,000, with a similar percentage breakdown of expenses.
5. The average cost per trip reported was \$5.52; average subsidy per mile reported was \$.80.
6. The eligibility for participation in all of the programs is age 60 or more or disability.
7. Four of the six programs are planning on growing service capacity by again as many or more riders as currently served in the next year.

8. The five nonprofits in the survey reported reliance on Federal Grants for funding; the transit agency in the study reported current reliance on local transportation funds; other current sources include Foundation Grants, public donations, and enterprise activities.
9. The nonprofit services indicated that future plans include continued use of current sources of funding, and one or more of the following:
 - a. Fundraising
 - b. Application for local block grants
 - c. Medi-Cal and Medicaid reimbursements
 - d. Solicitation of business sponsorships
10. Indicators of program success cited without prompting included:
 - a. Growth of service area and ridership
 - b. Satisfaction study indicating that 90% of program riders are now able to get where they need to go
 - c. Receipt of 180 applications for service during the first 8 months of program operation.
11. Start-up challenges mentioned included:
 - a. Establishing rider eligibility
 - b. Marketing the service to the community
 - c. Gaining organizational support for operation of the program
 - d. Stakeholder development.
12. All programs said that they were happy with their choice to implement a TRIP Model service and said that they would recommend the TRIP Model to others.

For information about how to start a trip model program, please visit us at:
www.ILPconnect.org or email to customersupport@triptrans.org