Action Planning for the First Six Months

Experience suggests that planning for a volunteer driver program is, at the very least, a six-month process. This assumes a major needs assessment has already been undertaken and the decision to develop a volunteer driver program has been made. Technical assistance materials in the planning kit will enable you to do a variety of things during your six-month planning process such as:

- Gain knowledge about volunteer driver programs.
- Identify volunteer groups, potential advisory members, and service partners.
- Develop a risk management and insurance strategy.
- Plan volunteer recruitment, training, and management.
- Undertake one or several community surveys.
- Hold community meetings.
- Develop a business plan.
- Prepare a transportation options booklet for organizations and older adult consumers.
- Prepare a presentation about your plans for a volunteer driver program.
- Select a sponsor and/or advisory group.

The following list is intended to provide you with the full range of planning activities that you might want to consider as well as a glimpse at the types of assistance that are available in the planning kit.

Planning falls into the following areas: transportation needs assessment, volunteer program design, management and management approaches, understanding of issues related to passengers and drivers, community outreach and promotion, funding needs and strategies, and methods for monitoring and maintenance.

Needs Identification focuses on collecting and analyzing data and involving community organizations and groups plus older adult transportation needs and programs.

Program Purpose identifies how the new program will supplement existing transportation services, area to be served, types of rides to be provided, and strategies for filling transportation gaps.

Program Structure Design includes identification of features such as: the sponsoring organization, the target population, the service area, the types of rides, the hours of operation, the fleet size (if owned), the sponsoring organization(s), the services offered (supportive transportation), and the fees (if any).

Rider and Driver Information include rider requirements and agreements additionally driver requirements and agreements.

Discussions with Experts include meetings with volunteer driver program leaders who have expertise in organizing and implementing volunteer driver programs.

Community Outreach includes development of a strategy for involving community organizations (faith based, older adult services, transportation services) and development of a strategy for involving and informing them by organizing meetings, providing informational materials, and making presentations.

Program Marketing and Educational Materials include brochures, newsletters, and visual slide presentations.

Funding Needs and Strategies include identification of initial requirements for start-up funding and types of funders (local, state, national), possibilities for in-kind donations, preparation of donation letters and funding proposals.

Donation Acquisition Methods include possible funding requirements, identifying possible funders, knowing in-kind donation requirements, listing possible in-kind donors, developing funding proposals, and developing donation letters.

Program Monitoring and Maintenance include creating a strategy for monitoring and evaluation, developing evaluation criteria, identifying indicators of success, deciding on frequency of program review.

Review and Evaluation Strategy includes evaluation criteria, indicators for success, frequency of review; and development of evaluation activities including satisfaction surveys, telephone inquiries, rider/driver data analysis, and focus groups.

Reporting Methods include internal and external reporting.

As was mentioned earlier, this six-month timeframe for planning a volunteer driver program assumes that a major needs assessment has already been undertaken, the decision to develop a volunteer driver program has been made (or is in the process of being made), and individuals or groups in the community have been mobilized to begin the planning process.