

**-SUMMARY-**

**FAITH IN ACTION (FIA)  
VOLUNTEER TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM SURVEY**

**COLLABORATIVE EFFORT AMONG:  
FAITH IN ACTION, EASTER SEALS & THE BEVERLY FOUNDATION**

- Responding FIA programs serve urban, suburban and rural areas.
- Most FIA programs (94%) use automobiles to transport care receivers.
- Most FIA programs (100%) serve seniors and (89%) people with disabilities.
- 69% of responding programs list age as an eligibility consideration for riders and 75% also list physical limitations as an eligibility consideration for riders.
- Most (69% - 89%) FIA programs surveyed provide transportation for care receivers during the days, evenings, weekdays, and weekends while fewer (25%) provide transportation services at night.
- FIA programs have a variety of reservation requirements. While some (25%) require only same day notice, 69% ask for two or more days advance notice for reservations—some as much as a week to 12 days.
- Riders themselves make the majority (94%) of transportation reservations, while caregivers/family members are the next largest group (63%) to make reservations. Some others who make reservations are care managers, doctor's office staff, ADS staff and public health/social service staff.
- No responding programs had a collision in their program during the last year and at least 63% (all responding to this item) did not have collisions in over 10 years.
- The main volunteer activities that take place at the FIA sites surveyed include transportation, grocery shopping, friendly visitor and respite care. Activities such as home repairs, yard care, chores, telephone reassurance, social groups and errands/bill paying are also offered.
- Responding programs have been operating for an average of 7 years and have ridership that varies from 6-760 riders per year and a widely varying number of one-way rides per year.
- The number of volunteer drivers varies from 30-292 with an average of 81 drivers per program. Few of the drivers are reimbursed for mileage, and some of those at \$.10/mile.
- Annual transportation program budget also varies from \$0 to \$30,000/year with percentage of budget from donations varying from 0% to 100%.
- Responding FIA programs had a significantly greater number of female than male volunteer drivers. Although some programs have a few college and young adult age volunteer drivers and many mid-lifers, the majority of volunteer drivers are young seniors and older adults whose average length of service ranges from 2-5 years.

- Responding programs provide various transportation related assistance including: door-to-door, door-thru-door, in and out of vehicle and staying with rider at appointments.
- 100% of responding programs utilize volunteer drivers' vehicles for transporting care receivers and 13% use the rider's vehicles, as well.
- Nearly 25% of responding programs have directors and staff insurance and fewer have non-owned/hired auto liability, while 81% have excess auto liability for volunteers. 60% of programs hold accident insurance for volunteers while still and 69% hold personal liability insurance for volunteers. Finally, a few (19%) have general liability insurance either for the organization or through their sponsoring organization. The cost for insurance ranged from \$325/year to \$3713/year (for entire organization).
- Trips were most frequently provided (94%) for non-emergency medical appointments, second most frequently for shopping and finally for personal activities.
- A volunteer's most usual time commitment is once per week, however some commit a greater amount of time, and others less. Volunteer drivers also help in many other capacities within the organization. For example, volunteer drivers also serve as escorts, with caregiving services, with fundraising, as board members, with scheduling/dispatch, volunteer recruitment and record keeping.
- According to responding programs, reasons that volunteers say they drive are to:
  - #1: help others
  - #2: do something meaningful
  - #3: give back
- Volunteer drivers in these programs say that the following give them the most satisfaction:
  - Feeling needed
  - Learning to help
  - Getting to know the riders
- Several suggestions were made as to getting more volunteers involved in driving seniors in their communities:
  - Show the need for this service and that the program is viable
  - Reimburse drivers/give gift cards for gas
  - Promote program and mission
  - Protect from liability/better insurance
  - Show small time commitment and flexible program
- The main methods used for recruiting volunteer drivers included community meetings (63%), newspaper articles (38%), word of mouth, newsletters and church bulletins/announcements.

- 56% of the responding programs require training for their volunteer drivers. Training that is provided includes:
  - Sensitivity training
  - What to do in case of a mishap
  - Program guidelines (policies/procedures)
  - Traffic laws/safe driving
  - Wheelchair handling/transfers
  
- 100% of the programs maintained some records for their volunteer drivers that included both valid driver's license and motor vehicle insurance. The programs also kept trip reports, driver-record check results and criminal-record check results.
  
- Driver management problems were infrequent. However, those addressed by responding programs included:
  - Drivers not being available when needed (most common)
  - Rider complaints
  - Tardiness
  - Insensitivity
  - Incompetence
  - Communication skills
  
- 73% of responding programs have job descriptions for their drivers.
  
- 100% of the programs an established recognition method—several cited more than one. Recognition methods include:
  - Special event for volunteers (100%)
  - Verbal/written appreciation
  - “Thanks” for a good job
  - Public acknowledgement
  - Certificate of appreciation and feedback
  
- Most of the programs agreed that volunteer drivers are difficult to recruit but once they begin driving, they tend to continue for long periods.
  
- Programs noted a variety of keys to success. The following were 7 common themes among them:
  - Flexibility
  - Respect and appreciate volunteers—understand their strengths and limitations
  - Regular communication—both among volunteers and between coordinator and volunteers
  - Established policies and procedures, as well as program and position descriptions
  - Bring volunteers on who have a passion for the mission and understand the need
  - Driver screening and training in place
  - Coalitions among churches and agencies, also collaborating with existing agencies to avoid duplication and work together

- Programs also listed the following best practices developed with respect to supporting caregivers:
  - Flexibility with volunteer schedules
  - Staying with care receiver during appointments
  - Making a trip to the pharmacy with the care receiver after appointments
  - Training specifically for drivers
  - Dependability/reliability
  - Having an emergency system in place
  - Volunteer screening
  - Establishing limit as to how many times a driver can be called per week
  - Providing rides when ever possible
  - Ask for as much notice as possible for the least hassle—have an established reservation policy
  - Developing relationships with caregivers
  - Establishing a system so that volunteers (and program) understand care receivers' need, medical condition and mobility
  - Providing door to door assistance
  - Keeping drivers close to home for neighbor pick-up
  - Saying 'thank you' to volunteers
  
- From a list provided, programs noted several forms that would be helpful to their programs including:
  - Program brochures
  - Job description
  - Recruitment forms
  - Scheduling forms
  - Feedback forms
  - Trip report forms
  - Maintenance checklist
  - Caregiver contact info form
  - Evaluation forms
  
- The following advice was offered for others considering starting a volunteer transportation program:
  - Be prepared for tremendous need
  - Don't give up—it's not easy, but it is worthwhile
  - You can't be everything to everyone
  - Be open and honest with volunteers re: everything that driving entails
  - When starting a program, ask someone who's done it, don't reinvent the wheel
  - Screen volunteer applicants carefully
  - Establish open/regular communication with volunteers
  - Set limits (rules/responsibilities) for clients and know it's ok to refuse requests if necessary