

Volunteer Driver TurnKey Kit

Planning Implementation Evaluation



Senior Friendliness & Public and Paratransit Services

Public and Paratransit Services can be critical to older adults who have limited their driving or have stopped driving altogether. However, it is the degree of “senior friendliness” of these services that will determine whether transportation enables seniors to experience a sense of independence, to get where they need to go, and/or to enjoy an acceptable quality of life.

Research conducted by the Beverly Foundation and policy and program initiatives of government and non-profit agencies at the national, state, and local level have defined the 5 A’s. Today they have been adopted as criteria for standards in senior transportation. The 5 A’s include five key factors below:

The 5 A’s of Senior Friendly Transportation

- Availability:** Transportation services that are available to seniors... Not only are services offered, but they meet expectations of time availability (evenings/weekends) and quantity (rides not limited).
- Acceptability:** Transportation services that are acceptable to seniors... Service quality is deemed satisfactory in terms of advance scheduling, vehicle cleanliness, driver sensitivity to seniors, and wait time.
- Accessibility:** Transportation services that seniors can access... Services are easy to use because they offer supportive assistance (e.g. driver comes to door) and they provide rides where seniors need to go.
- Adaptability:** Transportation services that can be adapted to senior needs... Services accommodate seniors’ needs for scheduling multiple stops, and providing additional support (assistance with walkers and wheelchairs, and help at destination).
- Affordability:** Transportation services that are affordable for seniors and the program... The potential for low-cost operations can enable programs to offer services free of charge, and to be financially sustainable.

Adopting senior friendliness criteria can provide a means for thinking about and assessing just how senior friendly a transportation service is, or could be. Such criteria also can serve to establish a baseline for measuring the effectiveness of coordination efforts and can provide benchmarks that help move coordination initiatives forward.

“The Senior Friendliness Calculator”, a method for calculating senior friendliness, is on the back page.

Calculate the Senior Friendliness

Now you might want to review your program's senior friendliness. To do so, check each of the factors below that are represented within your program. Each check equals one point. When you have completed your review, add up your score and look at the scoring key at the bottom of the page to know where you are on "the road to senior friendliness."

Availability : The Transportation Service....

- provides transportation to seniors
- can be reached by the majority of seniors in the community
- provides transportation anytime (day, evenings, weekends, 24/7)
- can take riders to destinations beyond city & county boundaries
- maintains organizational relationships with human service agencies

Acceptability: The Transportation Service...

- uses vehicles that are easy for seniors to access
- offers "demand response" with no advance scheduling requirement
- provides driver "sensitivity to seniors" training
- adheres to narrow "window of time" for home and destination pick up
- ensures cleanliness and maintenance of vehicles

Accessibility: The Transportation Service...

- can accommodate the needs of a majority of elders in the community
- has information program for improving senior transportation knowledge
- can provide "door-thru-door" transportation when needed
- can provide services to essential and non-essential activities
- can link seniors with "more appropriate" transportation options

Adaptability: The Transportation Service...

- will provide transportation escorts when needed
- can provide multiple stop trips for individual passengers
- can access vehicles that accommodate wheelchairs and walkers
- maintains a policy of "adapting the system to meet needs of seniors"
- undertakes annual senior customer survey for service improvement

Affordability: The Transportation Service...

- offers reduced fares (or free transportation) to senior passengers
- secures funding specifically to support senior transit services
- offers opportunity to purchase monthly pass instead of paying cash
- offers options for purchasing tickets by mail or the internet
- uses volunteer drivers to reduce costs for providing "extra" services

Total **The Road to Senior Friendliness**

