

Volunteer Driver TurnKey Kit

Planning Implementation Evaluation

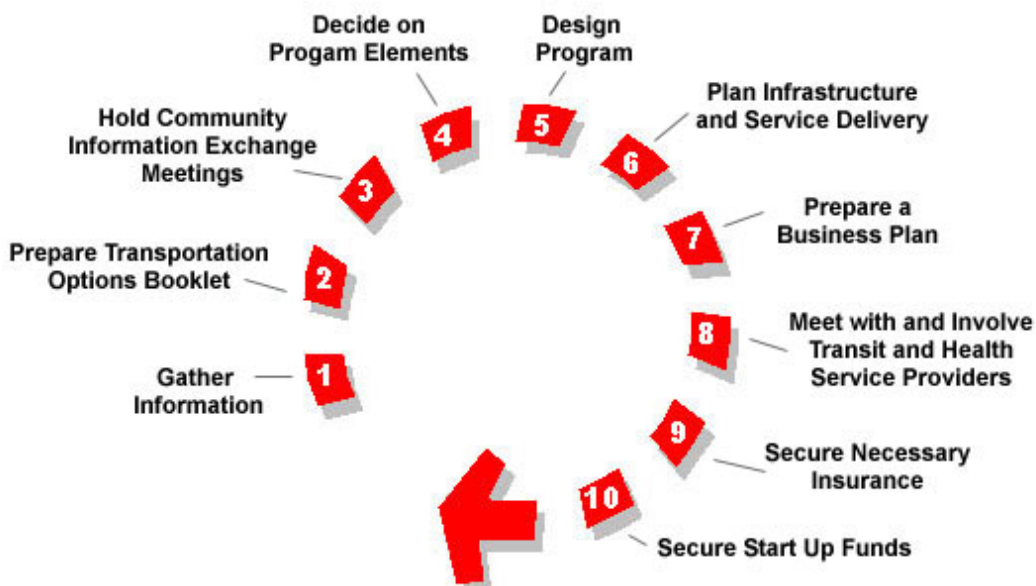


DISCUSSION OF PLANNING

Community planning is often focused on the creation of “a plan.” It might be a plan for a new hospital unit, for a new way of coordinating social services, or for new infrastructure improvements in the transportation system. The planning process can be long and arduous, the mid result can be a plan, and the end result can be a new structure, improved service, or expanded infrastructure. In many instances, the process can be just as important as the outcome.

Community planning for the development of a volunteer driver program is not so much about the creation of “a plan” as it is about the involvement of stakeholders in the information gathering and community support building process. A general transportation needs assessment would probably be the first step in the planning process, however, our planning approach assumes that a needs assessment has been completed, the need for a volunteer driver program has been recognized, and the decision has been made to move forward with a volunteer driver program.

The illustration below suggests planning activities that you will want to consider during this post decision phase of the planning process.





For the most the planning cycle emphasizes getting to know about and involving the community, because a transportation service is, by its very nature, linked with the community. In designing a new transportation service, it is important to recognize and to be knowledgeable about what is out there and ensure that the volunteer driver program that is being developed supplements rather than competes with existing services. If, for example, your volunteer driver program is somewhat similar to a taxi service, it may be difficult to get community support and funding because it is viewed as a competitor rather than part of the transportation team. Alternately, if your volunteer driver program could be sponsored by an existing transportation program rather than function as a stand alone system, it could greatly simplify your fundraising and implementation task.

The Planning Kit contains practical materials that will facilitate the planning process. These are not organized for the purpose of creating “a plan” but rather for developing information and materials that can be of use in the course of implementation. Included are a number of materials that should be helpful in deciding on how to move forward, and in developing a design and getting the process to the point where it is possible to implement a volunteer driver program.

The “goodness of the planning process” will have considerable impact on the “goodness of the program.” Getting input from the community, designing the program, preparing a transportation booklet, involving human and transportation services, and preparing a business plan takes considerable time and effort. Thus, planning for a volunteer driver program could, and probably should, take a minimum of six months.