

CAC's Office on Aging

Senior Friendly

Taxicab Certification Project



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Knoxville-Knox County Tennessee

- Population 425,000
 - City: 204,000
 - Suburbs: 158,000
 - Rural: 50,000

- Public transit, Knoxville Area Transit (KAT), serves the city with 80 vehicles, moving 3.2 million passengers per year



Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee

- Public, non-profit, semi-governmental agency created in 1966
 - Joint resolution of city and county
- Umbrella Agency - Budgets \$32 million per year
- Programs include:
 - Head Start, LIHEAP, Workforce Connections, Gardens/Urban Farm, Family Assistance, Neighborhood Centers, Housing Rehabilitation and Construction, Homeless Services



Office on Aging – A Division of CAC

- About twenty programs for seniors and people with disabilities
- Home-delivered & congregate meals (1,100 daily)
 - State-of-the-art cook/chill kitchen
- Large senior center, case management, minor home repairs and chores performed by volunteers, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, RSVP, Senior Employment, assistance with prescriptions, computers and pets



Office on Aging has Managed a Transportation Program Since 1979 - CAC Transit

- Provides about 915 trips/day with 50 vehicles
- Individuals who cannot be served by KAT
- Most funding from Medicaid – TennCare
- Other Funding Sources:
 - Job Access Reverse Commute, Community Services Block Grant, Older Americans Act, Knox County
- Contracts with large area health systems, afterschool daycare, Senior Nutrition, Vocational Rehabilitation, Social and Recreational Outings



Alternative Transportation Options

Office on Aging transportation initiatives are
funded by the
National Center on Senior Transportation
and
the Federal Transit Administration's
New Freedom Program



Volunteer Assisted Transportation

- For seniors and people with disabilities who require aid and assistance to travel safely
- Volunteers drive agency-owned vehicles after comprehensive screening and training
- Hybrid sedans and wheelchair-accessible minivans
- Increased independence for riders –
No restrictions on trip purpose



Volunteer Drivers

- Screening:
 - Criminal Background Check
 - Motor Vehicle Record
 - Drug and Alcohol Screen
 - Included in ongoing, random screening group
 - D.O.T. Physical
- Training:
 - AAA Driver Improvement Program
 - CPR & First Aid Certification
 - Passenger Assistance Techniques
 - Vehicle Orientation



Social and Recreational Trips

- Funds are available to provide expanded service for social and recreational outings for seniors and people with disabilities
- The New Freedom Program contracts with CAC Transit to transport seniors to music concerts, movies, senior centers, community fairs and events



Mobility Navigator

- Program staff serve as transportation information and referral experts and assist callers with finding the right transportation options for their needs
- Will assist with applications and provide travel training if needed



Senior Friendly Taxicab Certification Project:

The Problem

- Transportation options are a high priority for seniors who need to stop driving
- Taxicab service is often the best choice
- However, some seniors are hesitant to use taxicabs due to problems with service and questionable driver credentials



Senior Friendly Taxicab Certification Project:

The Solution

- Partnerships with the Knoxville Police Department & Local Taxicab Companies
- Taxicab drivers volunteer to:
 - Comprehensive Background Check
 - D.O.T. Physical
 - Drug & Alcohol Screening
 - AAA East Tennessee Driver Improvement Program
 - Complete CPR & First Aid Certification
 - Passenger Assistance & Sensitivity Techniques for escorting seniors & passengers with disabilities
 - Customer Service Training



Benefits to Taxicab Drivers

- Become “Certified Senior Friendly” taxicab driver
- Office on Aging publicizes and promotes Senior Friendly Taxicab services in the community
- Increased business and income from referrals
- Project pays all costs of screening and training
- Project pays costs of city license renewal for two years

Senior Friendly Taxicab Certification Project:

Lessons Learned

- Training has to be scheduled at convenient times for drivers
- Taxicab company management and communication staff also need Customer Service Training
- A stipend may be necessary for driver time



Senior Friendly Taxicab Certification Project:

NEXT STEP

- Continue to recruit volunteer taxicab drivers
- Develop wheelchair-accessible taxicab service



Image - www.usatechguide.org/images/standard_taxi.jpg



Additional Resources

- Taxi, Limousine & Paratransit Association
 - www.TLPA.org
 - Reports Available:
 - Recommended Taxicab Driver Standards
 - Recommended Taxi Company Standards
 - Recommended Paratransit Standards



Additional Resources

- Easter Seals Project Action
 - <http://projectaction.easterseals.com>
 - Taxicab Pocket Guide
 - Moving Forward Together: A workbook for initiating accessible taxi services in your community
 - Examples of local accessible taxi initiatives



Additional Resources

- National Center on Senior Transportation
 - <http://seniortransportation.easterseals.com>
 - Community and state projects that address the challenges that impact transportation services for older Americans
 - Technical Assistance
 - Online Transportation Library

