

Minnesota's Road to Volunteer Drivers Virtual Forum Series

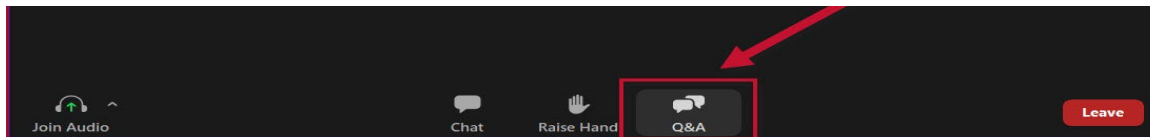
2nd Stop: Policy Issues & Real Life Stories

December 9, 2020 | 9:30-11:30 AM
Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA)

Welcome! The forum will begin at 9:30.

Housekeeping:

- To turn on **live captioning**, click the “More” button at the bottom of your screen and select that option.
- **If you have a question for the speakers:**
 - Use the **Q&A feature** at the bottom of your screen to submit questions at any time. These will be read verbally by the moderator during Q&A time.



- If joining by phone, press *9 to raise your hand. The host will allow you to unmute during Q&A time to ask your question.
- If you have a **tech question** send a Chat to “all panelists.”
- A **video-recording** of this forum will be posted to the event webpage following the event.
- An **evaluation** and a **PDH form** (professional development hours) will be emailed to all attendees following the event.

Agenda

Welcome + Opening + Real World Stories, 9:30 – 10:20 a.m.

--Moderated by Lori Vrolson, Executive Director, Central Minnesota Council on Aging



Legislative Panel Discussion, 10:20 – 10:50 a.m.

--Rep. Dave Lislegard, Rep. Dan Wolgamott and Sen. Jeff Howe; moderated by Sherry Munyon, Government Relations/President, Capitol Access



Minnesota Volunteer Driver Coalition: Mission and Overview, 10:50 – 11:05 a.m.

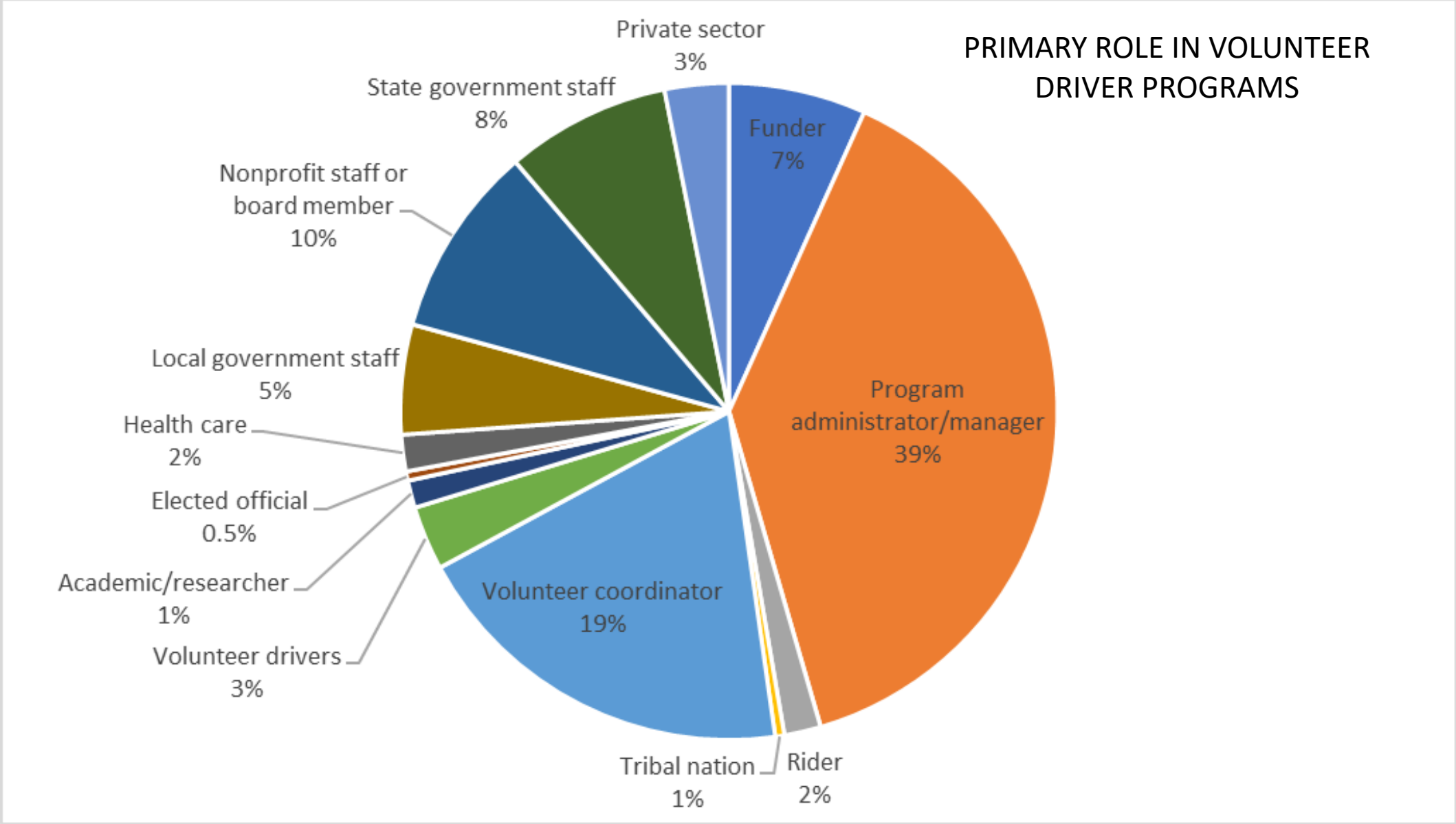
--Dawn Simonson, Co-chair, Minnesota Volunteer Driver Coalition



Audience Q&A, 11:05 – 11:25 a.m.

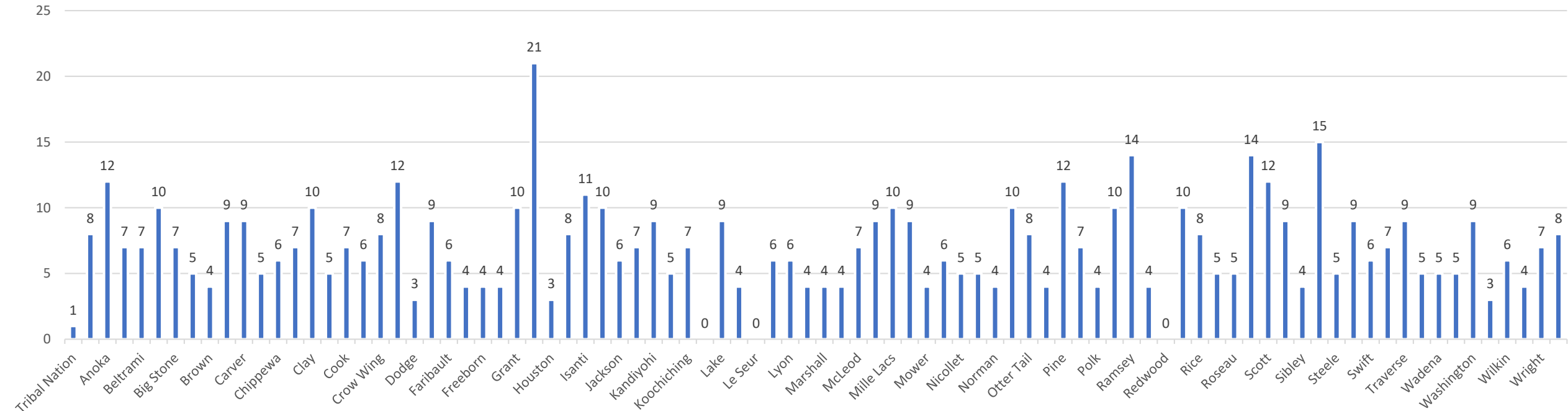
Next Steps, 11:25 – 11:30 a.m.

Who is in the room today?



Who's in the room today? (continued)

Registrants by County



... REAL-WORLD STORIES ...

Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.

Minnesota's Road to Volunteer Drivers Virtual Forum Series

 MINNESOTA

Why are volunteer drivers important?

When people are not able to drive, transportation to medical appointments is challenging, especially for people with few family members who live near them. Volunteer drivers provide safe, low-cost transportation across the state, primarily helping older adults and people with disabilities get to healthcare and other critical services. Volunteer drivers are especially essential in rural communities, where there are few or no options for transportation.

Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.

**Stephen Living at Home/Block Nurse Program
Stephen, Minnesota**

Volunteer Driver Pastor Mike Schendel



Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.

Community Partners in Two Harbors, MN

"This summer we provided transportation for a woman to a medical appointment in Duluth. It was clear, based upon our conversation on the ride down to Duluth that she hadn't been out much, so we decided to return to Two Harbors via the Scenic Highway and enjoy the wonderful views of Lake Superior on that sunny summer afternoon. About four miles outside of Two Harbors, we heard a train whistle. Not just any train whistle, but that of a historic steam engine. We positioned the car facing south on a side road just below the railroad tracks and watched, heard and smelled the steam engine as it chugged right passed us. Our rider was delighted with the ride home experience. We were very happy to have made her medical appointment day a good experience. It made our day as volunteer drivers even more rewarding."

Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.

From the Volunteer Driver Coalition...

*In 2018, volunteer drivers in Minnesota provided **more than 168,000 rides** for older adults and other non-drivers, giving them **access to healthcare and other essential community services and products**.*

*These **volunteers contributed 500,000+ hours** driving their fellow community members.*

Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.

An aerial photograph of a two-lane asphalt road with white dashed lane markings. The road is flanked by trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, yellow, and red. The background shows more trees and a clear sky.

Minnesota's Road to Volunteer Drivers Virtual Forum Series

m MINNESOTA

CARE (Community Action Respecting Elders) in Foley, MN



Joyce Rife
CARE Board Chair

Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.



Minnesota's Road to Volunteer Drivers Virtual Forum Series

m MINNESOTA

Rider of Faith in Action from Pierz, MN

“I need rides to my Vitreo Retinal Specialist every 10 or 12 weeks to get a shot in my right eye. I have wet macular degeneration in that eye, without this treatment I will go blind in that eye. They didn't used to have this, and people went blind, I am very thankful for the treatment and the rides I get from Faith in Action to my appointments as I am not able to drive myself.



I also need a ride twice a year to St Cloud Eye Clinic to have my eyes checked each year to see if my glasses are still helping me to see. Without Faith in Action and the volunteer drivers I could not get to these appointments.”

Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.

Volunteers are the Heart of Volunteer Driver Programs

Volunteer drivers provide
Rides to people
Delivery of meals
Transportation of donated organs

Organizations with volunteer driver programs serving Minnesota served
77,474+ people in 2018 and drivers covered more than 9.5 million miles.

Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.



Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.



Minnesota's Road to Volunteer Drivers Virtual Forum Series

Volunteer Driver Programs Connect People to Each other and their Community

Major life transitions can create unique risks for older adults in relation to social isolation and loneliness.

-Retirement

-Death of a spouse or other social contacts

-Changing health and functional abilities

Family or social contacts moving out of area

-Some health conditions can worsen due to social isolation or loneliness

Community connectedness can alleviate some of the impacts of social isolation.

-Volunteer driver programs bridge the gap for older adults to remain connected to their community and necessary resources.

-Volunteer driver programs provide safe, accessible and affordable options.

Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.

CARE (Community Action Respecting Elders) in Foley, MN



Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.



Minnesota's Road to Volunteer Drivers Virtual Forum Series

m MINNESOTA



“I get rides from a volunteer driver. He takes me to my doctor and stuff like that. That is important to me. Without my volunteer driver Mike, I wouldn't be able to get to my doctor appointments. If I did not get to my doctor appointments then I wouldn't be alive. Mike is so great. Before Covid, Mike and I would stop at McDonald's after the doctor appointments and eat lunch together and talk about life.”

Rides from the North End-South Como Block Nurse program in St. Paul



Community Partners in Two Harbors, MN

"I don't have any particularly funny stories about driving, but I can tell you that I always find them fun and interesting. Especially when someone tells me they had a "good time" or "haven't laughed so much in a long time." I even had one lady tell me I really helped to lower her anxiety about the appointment. We just seem to enjoy our conversations. They all appreciate it so much and often say they don't know what they would do without volunteer drivers.

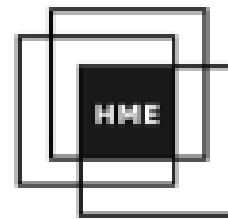
I appreciate the gas cards for trips to Duluth and it makes it a little easier to say yes to driving. The only barrier I can think of that keeps me from driving is the weather. I live 10 miles out from town and the road condition can vary along the way from home to pickup to Duluth. If I know for sure in the wintertime that the weather will be good, it's ok. However, as you know, northern Minnesota is unpredictable that way!

I have no concerns about liability. Volunteering, to me, means helping someone out without regard to how it affects you, unless it involves risk of life. We are doing God's work."

Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.



Gloria is 77, a St. Paul mother and grandmother of many. She has had rides from Hamline Midway Elders' volunteers for years, to her primary doctor as well as specialists. She commented that "it helps me get where I'm going because I don't have a car." Without the rides from Hamline Mid Way Elders, she explained, "I'd have to wait until family members get off work, and I might miss the appointment."



Legislative Panel Discussion

Minnesota's Road to Volunteer Drivers Virtual Forum Series

 MINNESOTA

Legislative Panel Discussion

Panelists:

Rep. Dave Lislegard



Rep. Dan Wogamott



Sen. Jeff Howe



Moderator:

Sherry Munyon, Government Relations/President, Capitol Access



Connecting People with Places

Volunteer Drivers A Critical Service

December 9, 2020



Volunteer Drivers

- Volunteer Drivers play a key role in our transportation system. These drivers give older adults, people with disabilities and others access to healthcare, home delivered meals, shopping and other key services.
- These volunteers are critical in our efforts to provide provide accessibility, efficiency and cost-effectiveness and serve approximately 80,000 people a year.

Barriers Faced by Volunteer Drivers and their Communities

- Organizations that provide rides or transport for meals or donated organs have faced increasing barriers to recruiting and retaining volunteers.
- The two biggest barriers are auto insurance rates and paying taxes on mileage reimbursement, etc.

Federal Ask & Viability

- Support Congressional action to change the federal charitable reimbursement rate of 14 cents per mile for volunteers to match the business mileage reimbursement which is about 57 cents today - a stark difference.

Legislators with Solutions

Senator Howe serves on the Senate Transportation Committee

Rep. Wolgamott serves on the House Transportation Committee HF2377

- Defined Volunteer Driver
- Limited ability of automobile insurance to increase rates for the service they provide
- Provided a cap on liability for volunteer driver organizations on claim arising related to actions of volunteer driver (matches local government liability)
- Provided a vehicle used by a volunteer drive is not a commercial vehicle.
- Created an income tax subtraction.

NO HEARINGS

Legislators with Solutions

Representative Lislegard and Senator Tomassoni

Rep. Lislegard is Vice Chair of the House Tax Committee HF3938
HF3983 Came close to becoming law

Bill allowed an individual income tax subtraction for reimbursement by a charitable organization that is in excess of the 14 cent rate, but below the standard rate for business (which is adjusted each year)

(Estimated cost to state is \$30,000)

State Ask in 2021 and Viability

- Adopt a definition of a volunteer driver in state statute which clearly provides that volunteer drivers are NOT a “for-hire” carriers.
- Provide an income tax subtraction for volunteer drivers so they are no financial penalized for volunteering.

These two items are the least controversial policies and they have both been formally adopted by MCOTA and forwarded to Governor Walz for possible inclusion in his 2021 Legislative package

YOU CAN CREATE CHAMPIONS AT THE STATE CAPITOL!

- **Contact your legislators**, introduce your self and describe your local concerns/examples
-
- Ask for their support and let them know you will stay in touch on this issue during the legislative session.

Volunteer Drivers

A Critical Service

- **Thank you to our panel members.**

On behalf of MPTA, MCOTA, Volunteer Driver Coalition and all of you who took the time to join us.

- **Questions? Comments?**

Sherry Munyon, Government Relations Consultant, Capitol Access, Inc.

MINNESOTA PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION



volunteer driver
COALITION

Minnesota's Road to Volunteer Drivers 2nd Stop

Policy Issues and Real-Life Stories

December 9, 2020

Dawn Simonson

Executive Director, Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging | Co-Chair, Volunteer Driver Coalition
volunteerdri Vermn.org

Volunteer Driver Programs are Essential

- More than **77,400 Minnesotans** count on volunteer-provided rides
- Riders are connected to medical care, including ongoing treatment
- Riders conduct business at government offices, banks, stores
- Riders are usually non-drivers due to physical or cognitive issues
- Volunteer drivers provide low cost, safe rides
- Volunteer drivers are trained to assist riders door-through-door

Volunteer Driver Coalition Formed in 2019

- Relationships matter!
- Living at Home Network connected Metro Area Agency on Aging to MN Public Transit Association (MPTA)
- Common concerns about the viability of volunteer driver programs
- Knew other leaders and organizations who shared our concerns
- Initial invitations sent to explore a coalition effort to support MPTA's legislative advocacy
- **MPTA, Living at Home Network, Metropolitan AAA, and MN Association of AAAs** co-founded the Coalition

Coalition Members

AARP Minnesota
Age Well Arrowhead
Aitkin County CARE, Inc.
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Anoka County Community Action Program
Anoka County Medlink
Anoka County RSVP
ARDC/Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging
Argyle Hope Program
Arrowhead Transit-Volunteer Driving Program
Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC)
Big Woods Transit/Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
B's Homecare Inc. & B's Adult Day Center
CARE – Community Action Respecting Elders
Care Partners of Cook County
Carver County
Center for Victims of Torture
Central Community Transit
Central MN Council on Aging
City of Sandstone
Community Partners
Como Park/Falcon Heights Living at Home Block Nurse Program

Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging
DARTS
East Central Regional Transportation Coordinating Council
East Side Elders
Faith in Action for Cass County
GoDakota
Hamline Midway Elders
Hastings Family Service
Headwaters RTCC
Help At Your Door
Hennepin County
Highland Block Nurse Program
Horizon Health
Keystone Community Services
Living at Home Network
Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors
Metro Meals on Wheels
Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging
Mid-Minnesota Development Commission
Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration
Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging (m4a)

Minnesota Association of Townships
Minnesota Board on Aging
Minnesota Community Action Partnership
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging
Minnesota Public Transit Association
Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging
Minnesota Social Service Association (MSSA)
Neighborhood Network for Seniors
Neighbors, Inc.
North End – South Como Block Nurse Program
North Shore Area Partners
Northeast MN Regional Transportation Coordination Council
Northwest Regional Development Commission
Northwoods Caregivers
Paynesville Area LAH/BNP aka R.O.S.E. Center
Prairie Five C.A.C., Inc.
Productive Alternatives Volunteer Driver Program
Rainbow Rider
Region Five RTCC
Roseville Area Senior Program

Scott County
Semcac
Senior Services Consortium of Ramsey County
Southeast Seniors
Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging
St. Anthony Park Area Seniors
Stephen Living at Home/Block Nurse Program
The Nokomis Healthy Seniors Group
Three Rivers Community Action
Tri-County Action Program
Tri-Valley Opportunity Council Inc.
United Community Action Partnership
Volunteer Services of Carlton County, Inc.
Volunteers of America – MN Our Home
Warren S.O.S.
WeCAB
West Central MN Communities Action, Inc.
Wright County Community Action

Coalition Completes Survey

- 63 organizations responded (2018 data)
- 60 programs serve older adults; 24 adults with disabilities; 16 youth
- 77,474 people served
- 168,398 one-way trips
- 9,588,033 miles driven
- 508,468 hours contributed



Common Issues

- Becoming more difficult to **recruit and retain** drivers
- **Pressure from insurance companies** on volunteers to pay higher premiums
- **Mileage reimbursement** over 14 cents per mile is considered income
- Nonprofit organizations are at risk of serious **financial consequences**
- Issues could be resolved with legislative change but difficult to get adequate support of lawmakers

Our Call to Action

1

Define a
volunteer
driver in law
as not
“for-hire”

2

Protect
volunteer
drivers from
increased
insurance rates

3

Create a state
income tax
subtraction to
reduce tax
liability in
Minnesota

4

Cap the liability
of nonprofit
organizations
that offer
volunteer
driver services
at \$1.5 million.

Our Impact

- Created a forum to share information across stakeholders
- Gave the Coalition presence through its website
- Made volunteer drivers a priority for the MN Council on Transportation Access
- Conducted a social media campaign through members
- Engaged elected officials to support volunteer driver programs
- Raised awareness of our Call to Action with candidates for elected office

Join Us – volunteerdrivermn.org



volunteer driver
COALITION

Q&A

- Questions?
 - Use the Q&A feature at the bottom of your screen to submit questions. If joining by phone, press *9 to raise your hand. The host will allow you to unmute during Q&A time to ask your question.
 - Unanswered questions and their responses will be posted on the event web page along with the slides and event recording.

www.coordinatemntransit.org/events/volunteerdriverforum/2020-21/dec9/

Wrap Up

- Thank you all for your time today, and please spread the word about this Forum Series, there will be a follow up survey out shortly for you to complete.
- Unanswered questions from this forum will be answered off-line and posted on the event web page with the recording.
- Contacts: Lori Vrolson Lori@cmcoa.org, Sherry Munyon smunyon@capitolaccess.us, Dawn Simonson dsimonson@metroaging.org, Tom Gottfried tom.gottfried@state.mn.us
- **Next forum: Wednesday, January 20, 2021: 3rd Stop: Volunteer Driver Recruitment and Promotion**
- Other future forum dates: February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19
- Note: Your registration is effective for all forums. No need to register again.
- For more information: www.coordinatemntransit.org/events/volunteerdriverforum/2020-21/