

How to Plan a Volunteer Driver Program

HIGHLIGHTS

Introduction

Highlights of volunteer driver programs

Key Planning Questions

Identifies volunteer driver program service and organizational features

Organizational Features

Presents a list of ten organizational features to consider when planning a volunteer driver program

Service Features

Presents a list of ten service features to consider when planning a volunteer driver program.

Feature Selection

Describes a planning activity to determine organizational and service features for your volunteer driver program

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit the numerous fact sheets and exercises in addition to the planning, implementation, and evaluation sections of the TurnKey Kit.

INTRODUCTION

Although some view volunteer driver programs as a singular method for transportation, they exhibit great variation in the way they are organized and the services they provide to passengers, many of whom may be older adults. Thus, a volunteer driver program generally reflects the needs, values, attitudes, and resources of the community in which it is located. This variation suggests the absence of a “one best way.”

- Some have a large staff, others operate solely with volunteer support.
- Some provide transportation just for older adults, others serve a more varied clientele.
- Some provide service in rural areas, others operate in urban and suburban areas.
- Some only rely on volunteer drivers, others also hire paid drivers.
- Some have no budgeted expenses, others have budgets in the million-dollar range.
- Some reimburse volunteer drivers for mileage, others do not.
- Some provide rides for specific needs, others provide rides to special destinations.
- Some allow escorts to ride free, others mobilize volunteer drivers as escorts.
- Some use passenger vehicles only, others use a mixed fleet of vehicles.
- Some provide thousands of rides each year, others provide hundreds of rides each year.
- Some charge fees to passengers, others suggest donations from passengers.
- Some secure tax support, grants, and donations; others initiate fundraisers.

SOME KEY PLANNING QUESTIONS

Volunteer driver programs take many forms because of the many service methods that can be included in their operations. Perhaps planning should begin with the question: What is the goal? Once that question has been answered, there are a number of important organizational and service questions that must be addressed. Several of these questions are below.

- Who is going to ride?
- Who is going to drive?
- What kind of vehicles will be used?
- How will the program be organized?
- What area will the program serve?
- Who will sponsor the program?
- How will the program be staffed?
- How will the program be funded?
- How will budget decisions be made?
- How will the program be coordinated?
- When will rides be available?
- What types of rides will be offered?
- What will be the destinations?
- How will eligibility be determined?
- What types of assistance will be provided?
- How and when will rides be scheduled?
- What training will be offered?
- How will risk be managed?
- What records will be maintained?
- What technology will be used?

ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES OF VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAMS

The features below are used by many volunteer driver programs to plan and organize their services.

- Passengers
- Drivers
- Vehicles
- Organizational type
- Service area
- Sponsorship
- Staffing
- Funding
- Budget
- Linkage relationships

SERVICE FEATURES OF VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAMS

The features below are used by many volunteer driver programs to plan the services and activities of their program.

- Availability
- Trip method
- Destinations
- Eligibility
- Assistance
- Scheduling
- Training
- Risk management
- Records
- Technology

The following pages will enable you to use these organizational and service features in planning your volunteer driver program.

SELECTING ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES

In planning your volunteer driver program, the first task is to identify the organizational features you want to include. Please circle or insert your selection.

1. What passengers do you plan to serve?

The general public and older adults _____
Older adults and people with disabilities _____

Older adults only _____
Other _____

2. What drivers do you plan to involve?

Paid drivers _____
Volunteer drivers _____

Paid and volunteer drivers _____
Other _____

3. What vehicles do you plan to use?

Owned/leased vehicles _____
Volunteer vehicles _____

Owned and volunteer vehicles _____
Other _____

4. How will your program be organized?

Profit corporation _____
Nonprofit corporation _____

Government agency _____
Other _____

5. What location (areas) will you serve?

Urban _____
Suburban _____

Rural _____
Other _____

6. Who (what organization) will be the sponsor?

A transportation service agency _____
A human service agency _____

An older adult service agency _____
Other _____

7. How will you staff the program?

Paid staff only _____
Paid and volunteer staff _____

Volunteer staff only _____
Other _____

8. How will you fund the program?

Government grants _____
Foundation contributions _____

Passenger/individual donations _____
Other _____

9. How will you determine a budget for your program?

Staff decision _____
Staff with board involvement _____

Staff, board, and others _____
Other _____

10. What relationships will you want to develop?

With transportation agencies _____
With human service agencies _____

With the faith community _____
Other _____

Now that you have selected your organizational features, turn to the next page and select the service features you want to include in your volunteer driver program.

SELECTING SERVICE FEATURES

Now that you know how you want to organize your volunteer driver program, the second task is to identify the services or activities your program will provide. Please circle your selection.

1. When will your service be available?

Weekdays _____
Weekdays and evenings _____

Weekday, evening, weekend _____
Other _____

2. What trip method will you use?

Round trip _____
One-way ride _____

Trip chaining _____
Other _____

3. What destinations do you want to serve?

Life-sustaining destinations _____
Life-maintaining destinations _____

Life-enriching destinations _____
Other _____

4. What eligibility criteria will you use?

Older adult passengers _____
People with disabilities _____

Members of an organization _____
Other _____

5. What assistance will you provide?

Curb-to-curb _____
Door-to-door _____

Door-through-door _____
Other _____

6. How will you schedule rides?

Telephone _____
E-mail _____

Self schedule _____
Other _____

7. How will you train your drivers?

In-house training _____
Contract with consultant _____

Link with public transit _____
Other _____

8. How will you manage risk?

Train drivers _____
Insure drivers and vehicles _____

Purchase insurance _____
Other _____

9. What records will you maintain?

Accounting records _____
Destination and mileage records _____

Volunteer hours _____
Other _____

10. What technology will you use?

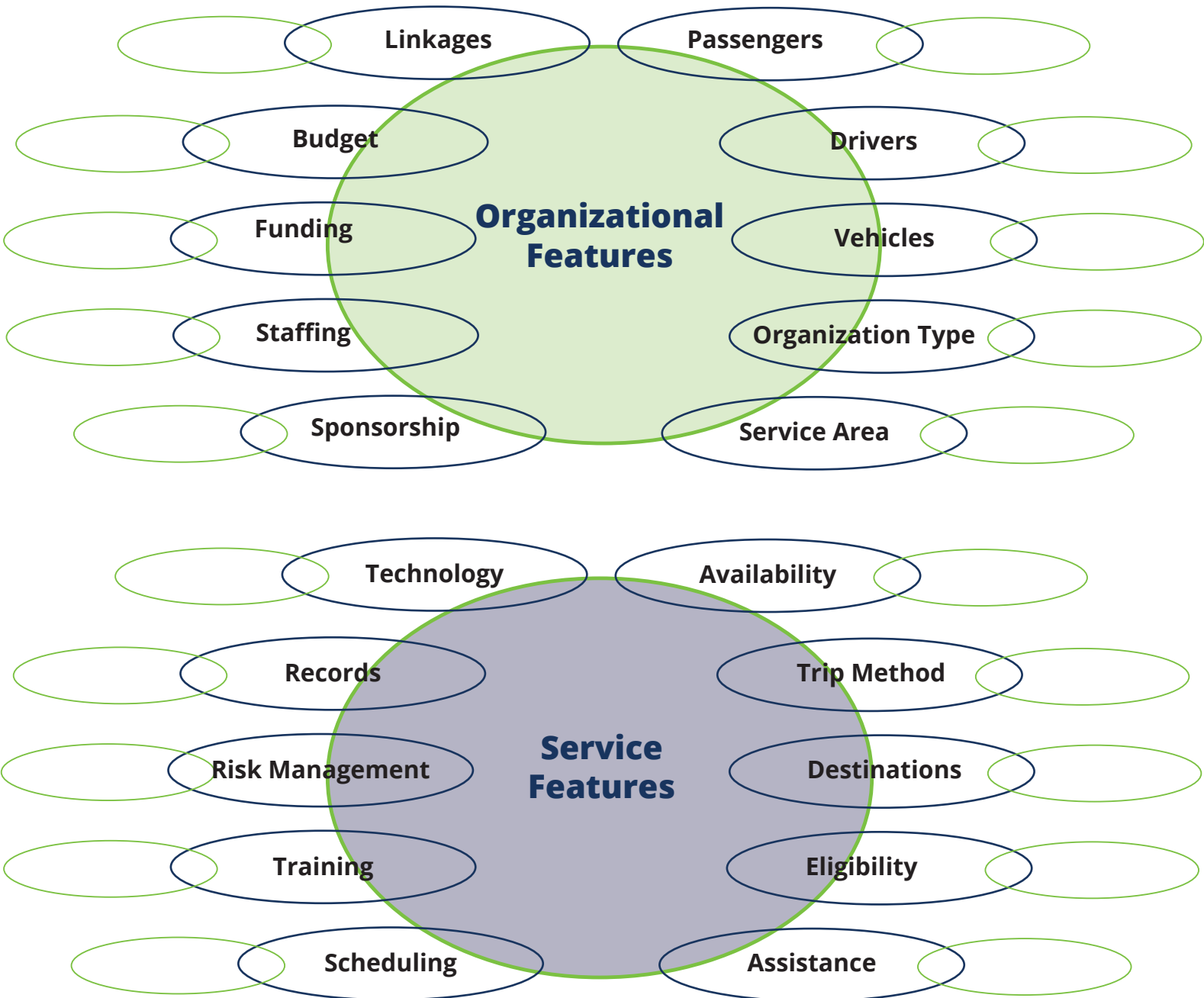
No technology _____
Spreadsheets _____

Scheduling and data software _____
Other _____

Now that you have identified service features, turn to the next page and develop a pictorial representation of the organizational and service features of your volunteer driver program.

VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAM PLAN

Your final task is to fill in the blanks for each of the of the organizational and service features you identified on pages 3 and 4. Once you fill in the blanks, you should have key elements of the volunteer driver program you have planned.



Congratulations!

You have completed an important step in planning a volunteer driver program!