

# A Lexicon of Transportation Terminology

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**Starting Point**  
Presents the need for a definition of transportation and human service terms

**Transportation Lexicon**  
Defines terms frequently used by transit providers

**Human Service Lexicon**  
Identifies and defines human service terminology

**Volunteer Driver Program Lexicon**  
Outlines several types of assistance provided to passengers (especially older adults)

**STARTING POINT**

Quite often, transportation, human service, and volunteer transportation providers do not speak the same language. The following transportation terminology may challenge the vocabularies of all professionals.

**Transportation Glossary**

Public Transit	Demand Response
ADA Paratransit	Trips/Rides
Fixed Routes	Fare Box
Flex Routes/Circulator Routes	Transportation Needs and Gaps

**Human Service Glossary**

Human Service Transportation	Older Adult
Transportation Needs	“Old Old”
Transportation Wants	Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)
Area Agency on Aging (AAA)	Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)

**Volunteer Driver Program Glossary**

Volunteer Driver Programs	Stay at the Destination
Curb-to-Curb Assistance	Destination
Door-to-Door Assistance	Trip Chaining/Ride
Door-through-Door Assistance	Value of Volunteer Time

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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

The information provided in this fact sheet includes definitions as well as a list of organizations that provide information and resources on each of the three topics.

*This fact sheet was adapted from Beverly Foundation and NVTC publications in 2021 by Dr. Helen Kerschner.*

## TRANSPORTATION LEXICON

**Public Transit** Public transit is provided by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public. Included are services by buses, subways, rail, trolleys, and ferry.

**ADA Paratransit** The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires all public transit systems that provide fixed route bus and rail service to also provide complementary paratransit service for people with disabilities who cannot use the fixed route bus and train service.

**Fixed Routes** These services are provided on a repetitive, fixed-schedule basis along a specific route with vehicles stopping to pick up and deliver passengers to specific locations. Each fixed-route trip serves the same origins and destinations unlike demand response and taxicab services.

**Flex Routes** Flex route services provide route deviation within specified parameters (distance, time) based upon requests from potential passengers.

**Circulator Routes** When limited to a small geographic area or to short-distance trips, local service is often called circulator, feeder, neighborhood, trolley, or shuttle service. Such routes, which often have a lower fare than regular local service, may operate in a loop and connect (often at a transfer center or rail station) to major routes for travel to more far away destinations. Examples are office park circulators, historic district routes, transit mall shuttles, rail feeder routes, and university campus loops.

**Demand Response** Comprised of passenger cars, vans, or small buses, service is provided in response to calls from passengers to the transit operator, who then dispatches a vehicle to pick up the passengers and transport them to their destinations. Such operations are characterized by the following: a) the vehicles do not operate over a fixed route or generally do not operate on a fixed schedule, and b) the vehicle may be dispatched to pick up several passengers at different pick-up points before taking them to their respective destinations.

**Trips** Sometimes referred to as rides, trips describe the one direction (beginning to end) operation of a transit vehicle or the one-way movement of a person or vehicle between two points for a specific purpose. It can also refer to the measurement used to count the number of individual passenger or vehicle movements.

**Fare Box** This refers to the value of cash, tickets, tokens, and pass receipts given by passengers as payment for rides. To qualify for funding under Public Utilities Code, transit agencies must earn a certain percentage of their total revenues from fares. The required ratio of fare box revenue to total revenue varies depending on the service areas.

**Transportation Needs and Gaps** Generally, this refers to a gap between the current/projected and the desired performance of the system. It also refers to transit system capital requirements and may refer to various market segments' transit-related needs.

## USEFUL PUBLIC TRANSIT INFORMATION SOURCES

- American Public Transit Association (APTA): <http://www.apta.com>
- Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA): <http://www.ctaa.org>
- AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: <http://aaافتs.org>
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov>

## HUMAN SERVICE LEXICON

**Human Service Transportation** This includes a range of transportation options designed to meet the needs and abilities of transportation disadvantaged populations (e.g., older adults, individuals with disabilities and/or those with lower incomes). Examples include: dial-a-ride (individual door-to-door requests), use of bus tokens and/or transit passes for fixed route scheduled services, and taxi vouchers.

**Transportation Needs** Refers to older adults' mobility requirements for sustaining quantity of life transportation services. This includes transportation, and all necessary assistance, to life-sustaining destinations, especially emergency medical services, doctors' appointments, and dialysis treatments.

**Transportation Wants** Refers to older adults' mobility desires for maintaining and enriching quality of life transportation services. This includes transportation, and quite often assistance, to destinations such as grocery stores, banks, post offices, restaurants, libraries, and beauty shops.

**Area Agency on Aging (AAA)** Under the Older Americans Act, the US Administration on Aging distributes funds for various aging programs through state agencies on aging. These agencies, in turn, fund local area agencies on aging. A local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) addresses the concerns of older Americans at the local level. It can play an important role in identifying community and social service needs as well as assuring social and nutritional supports are available to older people in communities where they live. In most cases, an AAA does not provide direct services. Instead, it may subcontract with other organizations to facilitate the provision of a full range of services for older people.

**Older Adult** Among human service agencies, identifying a person as an older adult or senior can vary. Some refer to those age 55 and older, others designate anyone who is 60, 65, or 70 as an older adult. The designation may depend on the source of funding.

**"Old Old"** Bernice L. Neugarten created the concept of "old old" to make the distinction between two stages in later adult development. In the first stage, older adults are generally in good health and active, and are referred to as "young old." In the second stage, they are likely to be living dependently, and are referred to as "old old". Many community and older adult transportation services say that most of their passengers fall into the "old old" age group, which generally refers to the 85+ population.

**Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)** These are basic daily activities considered essential for independent living. These include personal hygiene (bathing, grooming), dressing, eating, transferring/mobility, and continence.

**Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)** These activities are important for living independently, but are not necessarily required on a daily basis. These include household tasks such as using the telephone, managing medication, money management, housework, meal preparation, laundry, and grocery shopping.

## HUMAN SERVICE INFORMATION SOURCES

- U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA): <https://www.aoa.gov>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <https://www.hhs.gov>
- National Association of State Units on Aging: <https://www.nasua.org>
- National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A): <https://www.n4a.org>
- National Council on Aging (NCOA): <https://www.ncoa.org/>

## VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAM LEXICON

**Volunteer Driver Programs** A volunteer driver program provides transportation to passengers using volunteers as drivers and often using the vehicles of the volunteer drivers. Drivers generally provide door-to-door assistance and frequently also provide door-through-door, stay-at-the-destination, and escort support.

**Volunteer Driver** A person who drives a passenger in association with a formal organization, quite often a volunteer driver program.

**Volunteer Vehicle** Although the vehicle may not realize it, when it is contributed by a volunteer driver to take a passenger to a destination it is a volunteer vehicle.

**Curb-to-curb Assistance** Transportation service that involves picking up and dropping off passengers at the curb side. Although some assistance may be provided to help passengers in and out of the vehicle, the passenger is required to get to the vehicle.

**Door-to-door Assistance** Transportation service that is provided to and from the entryway of pick-up and drop-off by a driver or transportation escort.

**Door-through-door Assistance** Passenger service is provided through the door of the residence and/or the destination by a driver or transportation escort.

**Stay-at-the-destination Assistance** Transportation services that help passengers by having someone (a paid or volunteer driver, a volunteer or paid escort, or a family member) assist in getting to the destination, staying at the destination, and getting back to the vehicle.

**Destination** This is the target place to which a passenger travels. Three types of destinations to which people travel are: life-sustaining, life-maintaining, and life-enriching.

**Trip Chaining** This is the practice of making incidental stops on the way to or from a destination, such as a medical office, senior center, bank, or other life-sustaining, maintaining, or enriching destination.

**A Ride** This is identified as travel from one point to another point, such as from the passenger's home to the medical office. Trip chaining happens when the trip includes stops at several points, such as from the medical office to the pharmacy then to the passenger's home.

**Value of Volunteer Time** A volunteer's time is generally recognized in some way, such as with volunteer recognition events and appreciation. However, each volunteer hour that is contributed can be translated into a dollar value. Annually, the Independent Sector estimates the value of a volunteer hour based on data from the average earnings of private sector workers, excluding those who work on farms or in managerial occupations. Calculations are done for individual states as well as a national rate. In 2021, the national value of a volunteer hour is \$28.54.

## VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAM INFORMATION SOURCES

- The National Association of State Units on Aging, <http://www.nasua.org>
- The Corporation for National and Community Service, <http://nationalservice.gov>
- The Independent Sector: <http://independentsector.org>
- The National Volunteer Caregiving Network: <http://nvcn.org>
- The Village to Village Network: <http://vtvnetwork.org>
- **Shepherd's Centers of America: <http://shepherdcentersofamerica.org>**