Organizing for Volunteer Involvement

Initial Implementation Actions

- Establish written policies and procedures to govern priorities and sequence volunteer related tasks.
- Prepare a budget for the program.
- Identify insurance needs and purchase appropriate levels of insurance.
- Create a handbook of volunteer driver policies and guidelines.
- Establish targets for the numbers of staff, drivers, and riders that will be required to make the program viable, and develop a "break even" analysis.
- Undertake and complete a risk analysis.
- Explore software options for scheduling rides and managing data.

Risk Review

- Identify liability issues such as risk factors related to driving, exposure related to program design, and insurance needs and coverage of program and volunteers.
- Locate and investigate potential insurance carriers.
- Get quotes for insurance.
- Purchase insurance for program and volunteers.
- Develop volunteer driver and rider screening criteria.
- Prepare rider and driver screening materials.

Driver Recruitment

- Seek out local organizations for ideas about recruiting drivers.
- Develop a strategy for volunteer driver recruitment.
- Prepare volunteer driver recruitment materials.
- Develop messages that will appeal to volunteer drivers.
- Identify target organizations and groups for driver recruitment.
- Prepare job descriptions for volunteer drivers.
- Develop criteria for screening volunteer drivers.
- Begin volunteer driver recruitment activities.
- Explore possibilities for PSAs (public service announcements) in the media.
- Post announcements in strategic locations such as senior centers, libraries, and congregations.
- Offer time commitments that will appeal to potential drivers.
- Screen prospective volunteer drivers.
- Select people who like to volunteer, like to drive, and who want to help others.
- If possible, ask current volunteers to refer potential new volunteers.

Driver Training
- Prepare volunteer driver training strategy.
- Establish plans for driver training.
- Ensure that training involves information about the volunteer driver program, about driving, about socialization, and about assisting riders.
- Create internal training capacity or link with external training programs.
- Develop guidelines and procedures for volunteer driver training. Require each driver to complete training so that drivers will feel capable of driving and providing required services and assistance to riders.

Communication with Riders and Drivers
- Establish a system of regular and ongoing communication with riders and volunteer volunteers.
- Attempt to involve drivers who can and do use internet.
- Use multiple channels of communication with both groups, including land lines, cell phones, and e-mail.
- Maintain an "open door" policy for volunteers and riders to talk with staff.
- Provide a location for volunteer drivers to meet with each other and staff.
- Hold regular volunteer driver meetings.
- Solicit feedback from riders about their recent rides.
- Expect that phone contacts with riders will require more time than anticipated.

Driver Retention
- Organize an orientation that will allow drivers to see the "big picture" and understand the importance of their effort.
- Provide adequate training.
- Provide drivers with incentives for using their personal automobiles.
- Explore the possibility of reimbursing drivers for mileage.
- Respect volunteer driver needs in scheduling.
- Let volunteers know that saying no to a request is OK.
- Keep the workplace cheerful and laugh as much as possible.
- Organize an annual volunteer driver recognition program.

Activation
- Know actions needed to meet requests for rides.
- Document the accomplishments of the program.
- Share feedback from riders with volunteer drivers.
- Maintain ongoing communication and information sharing about the program and its contribution with the community.
- Review success and failures of recruitment and retention activities.
- Prepare and/or update a volunteer driver handbook that emphasizes guidelines for volunteer involvement.

Expanded information on each of these topics is available in separate implementation files in the TurnKey Kit, including Action Planning for Implementatio.