



## Volunteer Driver Program Resource Guide



## **Welcome!**

Thank you for your commitment to help non-driving seniors feel more connected to their community by administering a volunteer driver program. This booklet is a resource to help you start a volunteer driver program. As an organization, you should set your own policies and procedures as it relates to your volunteer driver program. NV Rides is here to help you get your program started and provide ongoing support throughout the process. This guide will answer many questions you may have. If you have any additional questions please do not hesitate to contact NV Rides at 703-537-3071.

## **What is NV Rides?**

NV Rides functions as a support program to a network of volunteer driver programs for non-driving adults age 55+ throughout Northern Virginia, and aims to increase awareness for volunteer transportation for senior adults throughout the region.

NV Rides provides community-based organizations that either have an existing volunteer driver program or those who would like to start one, with **ride-scheduling software, background checks, marketing & volunteer recruitment support, and program-development support—all free of charge.** In addition, NV Rides functions as a referral service for individuals who do not live in a geographic area where service providers exist, and also refers to volunteer driver programs outside of the NV Rides network.

The NV Rides program is a partnership between the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia (the J), Fairfax County and Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA).

## **NV Rides Service Provider Meetings**

NV Rides holds quarterly meetings for “service providers” (participating partners) to network. The meetings are informal and give program coordinators an opportunity to share best practices and acquire other useful information.

In addition, NV Rides frequently brings guest speakers to present about specific issues or challenges related to administering a volunteer driver program, such as volunteer recruitment, board development, social media marketing and volunteer engagement.

We request that you send at least one representative from your organization to attend four meetings per year. Meetings are generally held from 11:30 am – 1:30 pm on the third Tuesday in September, December, March, and June unless otherwise noted. Several email “save the date” reminders are sent in advance of each meeting.

## **GETTING STARTED**

### **Volunteer Driver Recruitment**

In order to start a volunteer driver program, your organization will need volunteer drivers who are willing to use their own vehicles to transport non-driving seniors so that they can remain independent. One way to start is to send a message to your organization's current volunteers and Board of Directors to see if anyone would like to become a driver or ride coordinator. Ask them to also reach out to others in the community who might have an interest.

As a service of the NV Rides program, we offer ongoing marketing and outreach support, and can consult with your organization about volunteer recruitment strategies specific to your organizational needs. We recommend that you recruit at least five volunteer drivers and one ride coordinator before launching your program.

### **Days and Hours of Service**

Most volunteer driver programs operate within normal business hours, Monday-Friday from 9am- 5pm. This is at the discretion of the administering organization. Typically, to place a ride request, eligible riders will call the organization administering the rides program, or may need to leave a message. The ride coordinator will return the call within the next business day to schedule the ride on the scheduling software provided by NV Rides. We recommend that ride requests be made at least three to five days in advance so that volunteer drivers can be notified and check their schedules for availability.

### **Background Checks**

All volunteer drivers within the NV Rides network must complete a secure online driver criminal background and Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles records check. These checks are funded by NV Rides. There are a number of services available to conduct these checks. Before launching your volunteer driver program, NV Rides will consult with you to determine which option would work best for your organization.

### **Insurance**

Volunteer drivers must have their own insurance coverage when driving in their own automobiles. A copy of the volunteer's current auto insurance card and copy of a driver's license or expiration date must be on file with the organization administering the volunteer driver program. The volunteer driver's fuel and/or mileage are considered tax-deductible charitable contributions for income tax purposes and can be tracked using the ride scheduling software. NV Rides requires the administering organization have an

umbrella insurance policy that covers volunteers in the event the claim is not covered by the driver's personal auto insurance.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a rider or another volunteer. Such information should never be shared outside the organization.

## **SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR VOLUNTEER DRIVER ORIENTATION:**

### **Commitment**

The length of a volunteer driver's commitment depends on that person's availability. NV Rides provides volunteer drivers access to our ride scheduling software that lets them select assignments based on their schedule and location, offering volunteers a flexible schedule. While we do recommend drivers give at least one ride a month, there is no limit to the amount of time a person can volunteer for this program!

### **Volunteer Drivers have the Responsibility to:**

- Follow all program guidelines, including safety guidelines, when participating in program activities.
- Be courteous and considerate of Riders and others. Inappropriate behavior, vulgar language, lack of personal hygiene, etc. cannot be tolerated.
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy regarding agency information, riders/clients, and staff. Be honest about your expectations and abilities.
- Be punctual and presentable for all scheduled rides.
- Notify staff as soon as possible if they need to cancel/reschedule a ride.
- Follow the ride schedule as planned.

### **Vehicle & Driving Safety**

- It is required that Riders and Volunteers wear seatbelts at all times while the vehicle is in motion.
- Volunteers should refrain from using cellular devices (i.e. phones, blackberries, PDAs, or other forms of distracted driving) while operating vehicles. Should a Volunteer receive a call, or need to make a call while a ride is in progress, he/she should drive to a safe location, park the vehicle, and proceed with the call.
- Volunteers should **NEVER** drive when tired or while taking medications that cause drowsiness. The use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs while providing or utilizing program services is strictly prohibited.

- Volunteer drivers are expected to follow all traffic laws at all times, including following posted speed limits and utilizing turn signals when appropriate. If a Rider requests a driver to take a toll road, then the Rider is responsible for that payment.
- Obey all traffic laws. Volunteers will be responsible for traffic violation tickets, including red light and speeding tickets, they incur while operating program vehicles.
- Report any concerns they have regarding Riders, vehicles, program operations, etc., to program staff.
- Maintain a valid driver's license and safe driving record.
- Once a volunteer has committed to a ride, he/she should make every effort to fulfill that commitment.

***The following are examples of the assistance provided by Volunteer Drivers. Volunteers are not required to perform any activity that may risk their personal wellbeing or the wellbeing of the Rider.***

Gentle Assistance:

- Open doors
- Provide verbal guidance
- Listen to Rider's stories
- Encourage Rider's independence
- Provide companionship to Riders during their ride

Physical Assistance:

- Help Riders walk to and from the vehicle
- Provide support for Riders entering and exiting the vehicle
- Help Riders with seatbelts and securements
- Negotiate limited stair steps
- Help Riders with assistive devices
- Help Riders carry light packages

Examples of Services **NOT** offered by Volunteer Drivers:

- Assistance to Riders regarding personal hygiene/restroom needs
- Lifting of heavy bags/items (weight limit to be set by individual volunteers based on their personal abilities)
- Preparing of meals
- Housekeeping and/or yard work
- Skilled medical care

## **RIDESCHEDULER GENERAL GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES**

To view the available rides, open [www.nvrider.org](http://www.nvrider.org) and log into your account using your email address and the password provided by the administering organization. We encourage you to periodically check your profile to make sure your personal data is up to date.

If you receive a phone call from a Rider cancelling a ride, please inform the Ride Coordinator via email or phone call as soon as possible. If the Rider has a new Date/Time for their appointment, tell them to call the Ride Scheduler (administrator) and leave that information for the Ride Scheduler.

If a Rider is not available for pick up, please inform the administrator who will attempt to speak with the rider's emergency contact.

Typically Drivers will be able to accept rides directly from the RideScheduler email sent whenever there are rides available. When a Driver clicks on "Accept" in the table attached to the email they will automatically be directed to the RideScheduler home page for Drivers. From there, Drivers can view the "Available" rides, their assigned rides using the "My Appointments" button, and may input miles driven in "Mileage Report".

A Driver who accepts a ride will receive an automatically generated email acknowledging their acceptance and providing the contact information for the Rider. The Driver must call the Rider to confirm the ride and arrange a pick up time.

The day before a ride, both the driver and the rider will receive an automatically generated phone call reminding them of the ride.

### **UNACCEPTING A RIDE**

If a Driver can no longer take a ride that has been accepted, he/she can un-accept the ride by opening the RideScheduler software located on the [www.nvrider.org](http://www.nvrider.org), and log into their account using their email address and the password provided by the NV Rides. If you don't see a login screen you are probably still logged in from your last visit to the site. Your name will appear in the Welcome part of the blue box on the left side of the home page.

Go to "My Appointments" and click on the "Un-accept" line on the ride you wish to UN-accept. The ride will automatically be placed back in the "Available" listing under the "Appointments" tab. The Driver must call the Rider back and inform them they are no longer able to accept the ride. Please inform them the ride is being made available for someone else to Accept.

An automatic email will be sent to the ride coordinators telling them a driver has unaccepted a ride. The coordinator will inform all the drivers (using the standard email used to schedule a new ride) that the ride is back in the available listing for a new driver to select.

### **MILEAGE REPORT**

Driver may input their odometer readings (or just put the miles driven in the “odometer end” box) in the system under the “Mileage Report” button in the Appointments tab. The totals will be available as an end of the year report for your tax filings.

### **LOGGING OUT**

When you are finished with a session, do not forget to Logout of the system by clicking “Logout” under the “My Info” tab.

### **RIDER PICK-UP**

Before Drivers depart from the vehicle pick-up location they should call the Rider to notify him/her they are on the way and to make sure he/she is still planning on taking the trip.

When the Driver arrives at the Rider’s pick-up address he/she will go to the door and knock/ring for the Rider (unless otherwise specified). The Driver may enter and assist the Rider with final preparations if requested (i.e. help with a coat or packages, etc.), and assist the Rider to the vehicle as needed.

If a Rider does not answer, the Driver should attempt to call the Rider again. If there continues to be no answer, the Driver should contact the program office. Office staff will attempt to contact the Rider or Rider’s contact. If office staff is unable to reach that person, they will contact the Rider’s emergency contact. If there appears to be an emergency situation, program staff will contact the local authorities for assistance and an incident report must be completed.

## **Volunteer Driver Job Description**

Volunteer Drivers pick up non-driving older adult passengers, drive them to destinations such as the grocery store, medical appointments the hairdresser or spiritual services and then return them to their homes. Occasionally driving requests may be one-way only. The destinations of rides vary depending on administering program's guidelines.

### **Qualifications:**

- Enjoy working with a culturally diverse group of seniors and/or persons with physical limitations
- A desire to assist individuals with special transportation needs
- Must possess a valid driver's license and good driving record
- Must clear background checks
- Must show proof of auto insurance
- Must be at 21 years of age (this is at the discretion of the administering organization)

### **Benefits:**

- Satisfaction of helping others
- Accomplishment in providing a much needed community service
- Developing new friendships with Riders and other Volunteers

### **Volunteer Driver Duties:**

- Provide safe, accessible transportation between home and requested destinations and back home
- Reasonably assist Riders as needed during pick-up and drop-off
- Drivers are not required to engage in activities where they do not feel comfortable.
- Ensure Riders make it safely to their destination

### **Volunteers are expected to:**

- Attend orientation and training sessions
- Decline any gifts or tips that may be offered
- Be prompt and reliable
- Notify the office of the program administrator and Rider as soon as possible if unable to report for a scheduled ride
- Protect confidential information
- Treat members and other volunteers with respect
- Exercise good judgment



## **Ride Coordinator Job Description**

Hours: Part-time, work remotely. Two positions available- 6 hours each per week.

### **GENERAL FUNCTION:**

Works closely with the staff at the \_\_\_\_\_ to provide volunteer driver- based transportation to non-driving adults aged 55+. Become expert with the Internet-based ride scheduling software for scheduling rides. Provide exceptional customer service while maintaining confidentiality. A commitment of at least six months is preferred.

### **DUTIES:**

- Serve as the Ride Coordinator of volunteer driver program, with support from\_\_\_\_\_.
- Schedule ride requests from clients and serve as database coordinator.
- Train, supervise, and assist in recruiting volunteer drivers.
- Respond to customer telephone, written and other inquiries about program in a prompt and professional manner.
- Maintain a log of calls/emails/inquiries and report to administrative staff.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

### **SKILLS, ABILITIES, EXPERIENCE:**

- Professional and courteous interpersonal communication
- Sense of timeliness in responding to calls and requests for information and rides
- Ability and willingness to learn and train others on a web-based database
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Ability to work collaboratively and effectively with volunteers and staff
- Knowledge of community transportation options is a plus
- Be patient and courteous under all types of circumstances, and maintain a warm, helpful and friendly attitude.
- Understand the limitations experienced by some seniors, such as mobility and hearing/vision loss.
- Balance concern for clients with appropriate boundaries.

### **REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:**

This position reports to the \_\_\_\_\_staff.

### **ORIENTATION AND TRAINING:**

Training for this position will be provided. You will be given a clear understanding of the procedures and ongoing support.

**BENEFITS:**

A sense of pride and accomplishment helping seniors maintain their independence, and satisfaction of working with persons in need, and giving back to your community. Meet new people and gain new experiences.

*THE SAMPLES ABOVE ARE AVAILABLE AS WORD DOCUMENT FOR COPYING AND PASTING PURPOSES UPON REQUEST.*

**Questions?**

Please do not hesitate to contact NV Rides if you have any additional questions.

**NV Rides Contact:**

Jennifer Kanarek, NV Rides Manager, 703-537-3071 or email  
Jennifer.Kanarek@NVRides.org

Gina Cocomello, NV Rides Marketing and Outreach Coordinator, 703-537-3070 or  
email GinaC@NVRides.org

For more information about the program and participating partners, please visit us  
online the NV Rides website, [www.NVRides.org](http://www.NVRides.org).

And follow NV Rides on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

**Mailing Address:**

NV Rides  
8900 Little River Turnpike  
Fairfax, VA