

## **Ride Connection**

**Issue Area:** Transportation

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Ride connection is a volunteer transportation service fills in the gaps most volunteer transportation services have. Run for and by older adults, Ride Connection is a non-profit, community service for persons with disabilities and older adults without alternate transportation. The service is provided in Clackamas, Clark, Multnomah, and Washington Counties in the state of Washington. The organization follows five main values to ensure effective service: (1) appreciate volunteers, (2) maintain relationships with providers, (3) deliver safe, personalized, and accessible services, (4) assure honest and accountable business relationships, and (5) lead by example. These five values have jumpstarted one of the best volunteer transportation services on the West coast. The service provides over 248,000 rides annually through the service of three hundred-seventy volunteers.

In 1988 through a citizen committee's recommendation and with the support of Tri-Met, it was decided that a volunteer program could meet the transportation needs of older, fragile adults. Ride Connection has a unique mission to link accessible, responsive transportation with community need by:

- Serving those without viable transportation alternative, giving priority to elderly and persons with disabilities.
- Coordinating transportation services in Clackamas, Clark, Multnomah, and Washington Counties.
- Coordinating system-wide training and safety programs.
- Developing and securing financial, volunteer and equipment resources for Ride Connection's network.
- Developing and maintaining provider programs.
- Acting as a liaison between funders and community agencies.

A friendly, adaptable, and accessible service are the three main components identified as strengths of a new volunteer transportation system for older adults. Ride Connection is run through partnerships with many organizations ranging from government programs to community centers and private organizations. The network of over thirty agencies helps to fund and guarantee a successful program. Through networks with a variety of organizations, Ride Connection has declared three new strengths of its service. They

involve volunteers and use collaborative techniques to minimize cost and maximize community support. Secondly, they have access to a variety of funding that would not be available to public agencies such as foundations, corporations, and businesses. Lastly, they have strived to reduce management and administrative responsibilities which occur when working with a large network of community agencies. These three strengths add to Ride Connection's success as an accessible transportation service.



**Related Resources:**

*Red Cross volunteer driver for Ride Connection*

Ride Connection. <<http://www.rideconnection.org/>>.

“Bus Dedicated for Jewish Seniors.” Oregon Department of Transportation. December 20, 2000. <<http://www.odot.state.or.us/pubtrans/documents/LechLechah.pdf>>.