

# Beverly Foundation

Fact Sheet Series

Vol. 1 (3)

## STPs In America

### Highlights

- **Transportation Options**  
*Identifies the types of transportation alternatives that are often available to the general population and to older adults*
- **Supplemental Transportation**  
*Introduces the concept of supplemental transportation for seniors*
- **STPs in America**  
*Provides a profile of Supplemental Transportation Programs for seniors*
- **What They Do**  
*Details their services and the way they support seniors*
- **Why They Succeed**  
*Offers evidence of the reasons STPs are successful in providing services to older adults*
- **5 A's Calculator**  
*Gives criteria to calculate the senior friendliness of STPs*

October, 2008

For More Information Visit  
[www.beverlyfoundation.org](http://www.beverlyfoundation.org)



Beverly Foundation  
Pasadena, CA

### Ground Transportation Options

Although older adults prefer to drive their cars, they often have a broad array of transportation options. Such options range from public and paratransit to private, specialized, and senior transit. The chart below identifies the range of options that are available to older adults in what would be considered a “transportation rich” community.

#### Senior Transportation Options

##### Automobile

**Public Transit** (buses, light rail, trains, subways)

**Paratransit-Demand Response** (ADA transit, Dial-A-Ride programs, community transit services)

**Private Transit** (taxis, limousines, chauffeur services)

**Specialized Transit** (shuttles and other vehicles serving businesses, senior centers, retirement communities, adult day centers, churches, and hospitals)

**Senior Transit** (paid and volunteer driver programs providing transportation to senior passengers and sometimes people with disabilities)

**Other Options** (bicycles, small cart vehicles, walking)

### Supplemental Transportation

Driving an automobile is the preferred mode of transportation for older adults. While it is estimated that 80% of adults age 65+ are licensed drivers<sup>1</sup> research suggests that many of the “old old” or those in the age 85+ age group will outlive their driving expectancy and become dependent on transportation options other than driving their car.<sup>2</sup>

Supplemental transportation options are organized to complement traditional transportation. They target older adults who choose not to drive or cannot drive because of financial, physical or mental limitations. Thus, it is the 85+ age group that often has the greatest need for and is targeted by supplemental transportation options.

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2004-2005*.

<sup>2</sup> Foley, et al. (2002), *Driving expectancy of persons aged 70 years*, Research and Practice, 92(8), 1284-1289.

## **STPs in America**

STPs is the acronym for Supplemental Transportation Programs for seniors. An STP is a community-based

**Profile of 830 STPs in America**

<p><b>General Information</b>                  Represented States <b>50 + DC+PR*</b>                  Average # Years Operation <b>19</b>                  Median Budget <b>\$30,000</b></p> <p><b>Senior Passenger Facts</b>                  Seniors Only <b>25%</b>                  &amp; People w/ Disabilities <b>75%</b>                  &amp; People w/ Dementia <b>55%</b></p> <p><b>Design Facts</b>                  Transit Service Only <b>15%</b>                  Offers Service Menu <b>85%</b></p>	<p><b>Organization Status</b>                  Not-for-Profit <b>88%</b>                  Other (incl. govt) <b>12%</b></p> <p><b>Fee Structure</b>                  Fees <b>21%</b>                  No Fees <b>79%</b>                  Rider Donation <b>55%</b></p> <p><b>Service Area</b>                  Rural <b>68%</b>                  Suburban <b>48%</b>                  Urban <b>44%</b></p>
--	---

\* District of Columbia & Puerto Rico

transportation that enables seniors to get where they need to go by providing the services that seniors require. In most instances, they serve seniors who no longer drive and the limitations (generally mobility and financial) that made it difficult for them to drive make it difficult for them to access traditional transit services. In most instances, public and paratransit services, and even private, specialized and senior transit were not designed to address these

limitations. The accompanying chart includes data from 830 STPs from the national STP database maintained by the Beverly Foundation. It is the result of eight Beverly Foundation national STAR Search surveys (2000-2007).

**What They Do** Perhaps the key feature of STPs is that they provide assistance that public and ADA paratransit services often cannot provide. For example, it may be necessary to walk to a bus stop to access public transit services or walk to the curb to access paratransit services. One way that STPs supplement traditional services is by providing door-to-door, door-thru-door, assistance at the destination, and escort services. Another way is by making services available at a variety of times, by crossing jurisdictional boundaries (or linking with STPs in other jurisdictions), and by allowing passengers to make multiple stops. It should be mentioned that while STPs identify themselves as providing transportation to older adults, in fact they also provide transportation to others who cannot access other forms of transportation. For example, some provide transportation to people with disabilities, to veterans, to children, and even to the general population.

<b>Service Features</b>			
<b>Type of Assistance</b>		<b>Service Availability</b>	
Curb-to-Curb	<b>43%</b>	Weekdays	<b>98%</b>
Door-to-Door	<b>80%</b>	Evenings	<b>47%</b>
Door-thru-Door	<b>67%</b>	Nights	<b>18%</b>
Stay at Destination	<b>74%</b>	Saturdays	<b>52%</b>
Escort	<b>47%</b>	Sundays	<b>43%</b>

Driver salaries are said to constitute as much as 50% of the costs related to providing transportation services. While many STPs use only paid drivers, others involve volunteer drivers, and still others use both paid and volunteer drivers.

### **How They Do It**

<b>Service Methods</b>			
<b>Type of Drivers</b>		<b>Type of Vehicles</b>	
Paid	<b>25%</b>	Program Vehicle	<b>23%</b>
Volunteer	<b>47%</b>	Driver's Vehicle	<b>89%</b>
Paid & Volunteer	<b>27%</b>	Rider's Vehicle	<b>12%</b>

A large number of STPs own their own vehicles, and many tap into Section 5310 of the Federal Transit Funding Program that provides 80% grant assistance for not-for-profit organizations to purchase vehicles to meet the needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities.

However, a large number of STPs do not purchase or own vehicles and use private vehicles owned by the drivers. It is especially the case with volunteer driver programs of which 91% use the vehicles of their volunteer drivers. This suggests while a majority (75%) of the volunteer drivers programs provide transportation to people with disabilities, for the most part their passengers are seniors who have mobility limitations and not necessarily the level of disabilities that make them eligible to use ADA (Adults with Disabilities) Paratransit services.

STPs are located throughout the United States.

All states (plus the District of Columbia and

### Where They Are

California	114	Washington	34
New York	77	Minnesota	30
Wisconsin	37	Pennsylvania	28
Illinois	34	Arizona	27
Michigan	34	Texas	26

Puerto Rico) are represented in the database. There are undoubtedly many yet to be identified, and many states with a sufficient number of STPs to put them in the top 10. There is no question that the study method of distributing surveys through national membership organizations and networks of aging and transportation impacted on the organizations that received the surveys, and consequently

the organizations that were able to respond to the survey and become identified as STPs.

### Where They Go

The general purpose of transportation is to get people where they need to go. Passengers riding on STPs are no different than people who drive automobiles. They **need** to get to life sustaining destinations, and they **want** to get to life enriching destinations. Some seniors may **need** to get to a doctor's office or a clinic three times a week, while others may **want** to go to volunteer activities every day. Some may **need** to get to the grocery store every couple of days, while others may **want** to

Doctor	Church
Pharmacy	Social outings
Grocery	Restaurants
Recreation	Social Services
Visiting friends	Beauty Salon

go to the cemetery to visit a departed family member or friend every month or so. Some may **need** to get to the pharmacy every so often while others may **want** to go to the hairdresser or the barber shop on a regular schedule. Regardless of passenger wants or needs, destinations provided by STPs often are determined by funding sources or sponsorship. The hospital or health center, the shopping center or grocery store, the city fathers or county council, the federal grant or United Way allocation: all can determine if passengers can get to life sustaining or life enriching destinations, if they can get to destinations beyond city or county jurisdictions, or if they can get to several destinations during a single outing. The accompanying chart illustrates the impact of sponsorship and funding on destinations.

Sponsor	Destination
Senior Center	Nutrition Program
Hospital	Medical Services
City Council	City Jurisdiction
Paratransit	No Trip Chaining
City Office on Aging	Anywhere

While much of the emphasis in older adult transportation is on the problem of giving up the keys, **STPs provide a solution** that makes it possible for older adults to continue getting where they need to go. That STPs have a 19 year average of operation is only part of the story, for **many have a tradition** of 30, 40, or 50 years of **community-based** and **community-supported service**. Perhaps their primary contribution is that **they fill the gaps** by **supporting** seniors (especially **those age 85+**) **with** financial, physical, and emotional **assistance**, and **thus complement rather than compete** with more traditional transportation services. While early studies of STPs emphasized small, and sometimes informal transportation services, today a **variety of organizations** (paratransit, community transit, specialized transit, senior transit) **identify themselves as STPs**, and thus have **budgets** which **range from \$5,000 - \$5,000,000**. In their effort to be what some call "the tie that binds" STPs strive to meet the 5 A's criteria for Senior Friendliness. (See next page for senior friendliness calculator.)

### Why They're Valuable

**10 Principles of STPs**

- STPs are the solution - not the problem
- STPs are a tradition - in many communities
- STPs are community based - and supported
- STPs fill the gaps - rather than compete
- STPs support seniors - especially the 85+
- STPs provide assistance - of many types
- STPs come in many forms - and sizes
- STPs can be sustained - many with limited funds
- STPs can be the tie that binds - seniors to life
- STPs can be senior friendly - and meet the 5 A's

STPs strive to meet the 5 A's criteria for Senior Friendliness. (See next page for senior friendliness calculator.)

# The Senior Friendliness Calculator for STPs

Beverly Foundation

The 5 A's of Senior Friendliness (below) were identified by older adults and compiled by the Beverly Foundation in 2000. They reflect the views of seniors who have driven an automobile for 50 years or more and often are the criteria by which older adults judge the effectiveness of a community-based transportation option. The 5 A's may be one reason senior passengers often view public and paratransit services, and even STPs somewhat harshly. Thus, it can be helpful for an STP to assess its services and even to consider making adjustments that can better accommodate the predispositions of their older adult passengers.

To calculate the Senior Friendliness of a particular STP, check each factor that is consistent with its operations. Each check equals 1 point. Your total score will tell you where your STP is on the "road to senior friendliness".

## Availability: The STP....

- provides transportation to seniors
- is able to recruit and retain sufficient number of drivers
- can provide transportation anytime (days, evenings, weekends)
- provides unlimited numbers of rides to seniors
- maintains organizational relationships with human & transit services

## Acceptability: The STP....

- uses automobiles to provide majority of transportation
- does not require advance scheduling
- involves riders to determine appropriate wait time
- conveys guidelines to ensure vehicles are clean and well maintained
- provides driver "sensitivity to seniors" training

## Accessibility: The STP....

- can accommodate needs of majority of elders in the community
- can take riders to destinations beyond city & county boundaries
- provides "door-to-door" transportation
- provides training to riders on how to access services
- can provide services to essential and non essential activities

## Adaptability: The STP....

- can accommodate riders who need or want to make multiple stops
- makes an effort to link riders with other services when appropriate
- can access vehicles to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers
- provides "door-thru-door" transportation when needed
- will provide transportation escorts when needed

## Affordability: The STP....

- provides insurance coverage for volunteer drivers
- charges reduced fees to seniors for transportation services
- accepts passenger donations for transportation services
- covers the driver's deductible in the event of a crash
- is willing to reimburse drivers for mileage or costs

Total

