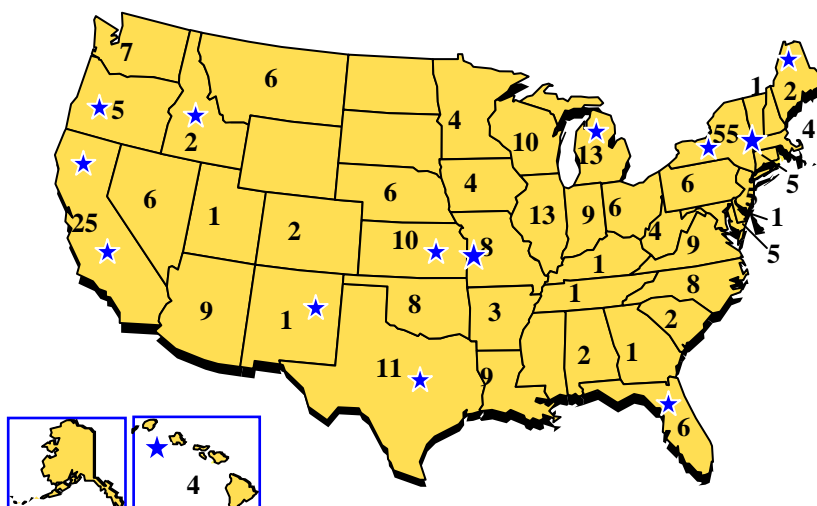


FILLING THE GAPS *A Snapshot of STPs*

Communities throughout the country are filling transportation gaps experienced by organizing community-based Supplemental Transportation Programs for Seniors (STPs). They are doing so for two reasons: (1) STPs provide many services that public and para transportation cannot provide; and (2) many seniors who no longer can drive cannot access traditional transportation options. Several examples of the specialized services many STPs provide include “door-through-door” service, the option of escorts, and travel across community boundaries.

How Did We Learn About STPs? Information about STPs was gathered through Senior Transportation Action Response (STAR) Search survey efforts that started in 2000 and will continue in 2003. The STAR Search surveys have been distributed via networks in aging and transportation throughout the country.

Where Are STPs Located? STPs have been identified in every state except Alaska, Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Rhode Island, and Wyoming. It is expected that the 2003 survey will identify STPs in those states as well. The map below indicates the location of the 300 STPs that have been identified thus far, although the large number of STPs in California and New York may be more a reflection of the survey strategy than their occurrence.



How Are STPs Organized? STPs are sponsored by a variety of organizations and groups. Some have large budgets, others small. Some provide transportation just for seniors, others serve a more varied clientele. Some have paid drivers, others use volunteer drivers, and still others have both. Some reimburse volunteer drivers for mileage, others do not. Some provide rides for specific needs (e.g., medical appointments), others provide rides for any purpose.

Some provide service in urban areas, others in rural areas, and still others service a mix of areas. Some provide escorts, others do not. Some transport single riders, others offer only ride-sharing. Some use passenger vehicles only, others use a mixed fleet of vehicles. Some require no rider fees but accept donations, others are fee-based, receive tax support, and/or grant funding. Some provide thousands of rides each year, others provide hundreds of rides. Some pay close attention to risk management issues, others do not.

Is There Key Data on STPs? Data relevant to how STPs are organized, what they do, who they serve, and the mechanics of how they actually provide transportation is delineated below.

KEY INFORMATION ON STPs

Location:	36% target rural areas; 18% urban; 11% suburban; 33% mixed
Longevity:	50% established since the mid-1980s
Organization:	83% nonprofit
Purpose:	56% medical; 40% social; 13% religious; 42% any purpose
Availability:	55% daytime; 44% weekdays
Service:	77% door-to-door service; 20% curb-to curb; 10% fixed route
Escorts:	46% provide (or can provide) escort services
Vehicles:	45% use autos; 50% use vans; 28% use buses; 6% use taxis
Rider Fees:	59% no fees; 20% flat rate fee; 10% mileage rate; 8% sliding fee
Drivers:	36% volunteers only; 38% paid only; 22% mix of volunteer and paid
Funding:	68% grants; 40% fees (or donations) from riders; 20% tax revenue
Problems:	46% finances; 7% marketing, 5% insurance

Why Are STPs Important? One reason is that as a specialized option, they support efforts to encourage seniors who need or want to give up their keys. Another is that they can compliment traditional transportation--public and para transit services--in any community. And yet a third reason is that they can reach what might be called a hidden population of seniors who have special mobility needs. These are the seniors who might not be able to remain in the community without a specialized transportation option.

In summary, STPs can be part of the tapestry of transportation and senior service programs in any community. They can meet needs of seniors for mobility. They can help seniors get to the essentials as well as enjoy quality of life experiences. They can provide special assistance to seniors for accessing and using transportation. And, they can provide what could be considered "senior friendly" transportation options.

Additional information about STPs is available through the STPs Mobilizer Project.

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