



No Problem Getting Needed Funds for One Volunteer Driver Service

A million dollars has been granted to operate the nonprofit TRIP program this year

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA, US, August 4, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The non-profit [Independent Living Partnership \(ILP\)](#) has been awarded grants for the next three years totaling more than 2.5 million dollars. Primary funders of the long-standing volunteer service in Riverside County California are the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), Riverside County Office on Aging, and the Elderly and Disabled Specialized Transit Program, FTA Section 5310, through the California Department of Transportation.

The TRIP volunteer driver service for older adults, persons with disabilities, sick and chronically ill, isolated, and homebound, low-income residents has been provided for residents of Riverside County since 1993. According to Richard Smith, CEO of ILP, "Over the years, our effective TRIP service has been funded through a constant stream of grant applications to various funding organizations."

Smith says, "The constantly overlapping grants, with different start and end dates, from different sources, are usually a challenge for non-profits to manage, but we have been successful with grant funding that has been on-going for so long. Smith attributes TRIP's success to the "rider-centered" volunteer driver model that is "anchored in strong relationships between riders and volunteers that contributes to consistently high levels of performance and rider satisfaction."

Ivet Woolridge, Chief Operating Officer of ILP says that there are people with disabilities and elderly and others for whom transit, paratransit, even Lift and Uber, "just do not work". They are ILP-TRIP clients. She says, "In every community there are older adults, persons with disabilities, sick and chronically ill, isolated, and homebound, low-income residents who are not well-served by alternatives that they are expected to rely on for daily transportation needs."

Smith says "Reliable, accessible, affordable, convenient, cost-effective services, sufficient to support user needs, need to be available for those who cannot receive adequate transportation in other ways". The mission, that ILP has been pursuing for 28 years, is to provide this kind of service, when and where needed, everywhere in the expansive 7200 square miles of Riverside County.

According to Smith, "TRIP's customer friendly service is less expensive to provide than the

alternatives that otherwise might be considered.” Woolridge says, “Over the years the per trip cost of the innovative, volunteer driver, mileage reimbursement service has averaged between \$5 and \$7, and each day TRIP provides about 400 escorted trips, free to the rider, for thousands of Riverside County residents who would not get where they need to go in any other way.”

According to Woolridge, “Last year, with a ridership down on 13% due to Pandemic, 976 individual riders received 111,343 one-way trips and 1.8 million miles of free, escorted, volunteer assisted transportation to ensure that they could survive the challenges of COVID.” Each rider made about 5 round trips each month, with more than 36% of the trips for medical purposes, 24% for grocery shopping, and 20% to enable the riders to accomplish other required errands and the remaining trips made for a variety of other purposes including to visit friends and family.

For more information about TRIP, visit ILPconnect.org. Smith began directing the TRIP Program shortly after it began. Woolridge, now ILP’s Chief Operating Officer, joined the organization in 2012. The mission of the Independent Living Partnership is to ensure the independence and dignity of the elderly and persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers through education and access to empowering services and resources.

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