

Innovative TRIP volunteer transportation service puts riders with disabilities in charge

People with disabilities report high level of satisfaction with free service

RIVERSIDE, CA, USA, March 20, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- California nonprofit attributes successful transportation service for people with disabilities to be the result of asking what was

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Richard Smith, CEO

needed and then designing the service to provide for specified needs and wishes. A survey of regular riders of the “TRIP” service for people with disabilities in Riverside County California found that [96.8 percent reported satisfaction](#) with the unique service, according to Richard Smith, CEO of the Independent Living Partnership (ILP). He says that TRIP was developed by ILP in the early 1990s to meet requirements outlined by the focus groups and

listening sessions held with members of the disability community.

According to Eula Robertson-Ray, president of the board, “This low-cost service, which is free to riders, delivers convenient and easy-to-use transportation for people in our service area who are unable to get where they need to go in any other way.” She says, “TRIP was designed to be a reliable, accessible, affordable, convenient, cost-effective service, sufficient to support user needs and available for those who cannot receive adequate transportation in other ways”.

A 2021 article in the [Disability and Health Journal](#) reviewed national survey data about barriers associated with delivering transportation services for persons aging with mobility disability and concluded that many face transportation challenges. The data identified specific inhibiting issues that include lack of service availability when needed, access limitations, requirements for advance planning, difficult waiting times, affordability, destination limitations, and health and stamina limitations. According to Robertson-Ray, “TRIP was proactively designed to overcome the obstacles and limitations cited in the national survey data.”

According to Smith, ILP also conducted a [study in 2021](#) in which TRIP riders were asked to evaluate the importance of the design elements of the existing TRIP service that they were using. Some examples of rider consensus include:

- 97% think it is important that riders are able to make trip arrangements directly with their volunteer driver without having to call an office to pre-arrange travel

- 90% think that travel should be provided whenever needed, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, even on the spur of the moment when necessary
- 95% think it very important to be able to be transported out of the area in which they live to access needed medical services or for other approved purposes
- 100% think it to be important that they are not charged for the rides they receive.

Other than TRIP, transportation services for people with disabilities are generally not able to provide these accommodations.

Ivet Woolridge, Chief Operating Officer of ILP, says that there are probably older adults, persons with disabilities, sick and chronically ill, isolated, and homebound, low-income residents, in every community, who are not well-served by alternatives that they are expected to rely on for daily transportation needs. She says that TRIP is proven to be effective and cost-efficient. She reports, "For the program year ending June 30, 2022, nine hundred individual riders received 102,772 free trips that were needed, and 849,016 miles of volunteer assisted transportation that cost ILP \$8.26 per one-way trip to provide."

Woolridge says that ILP's cost per one-way trip, being lower than the trip cost of other services, results from "TRIP being a 'rider-centered' volunteer driver service, anchored in strong relationships between riders and volunteers".

Detailed records show that the service has provided more than 2.5 million one-way trips and more than 35 million miles of volunteer escorted transportation for mobility challenged riders in Riverside County for 30 years. She says, "The TRIP program design is long established, reliable, proven to be effective and efficient, and well-liked by our riders."

For more information about TRIP and how to operate a similar service, visit ILPconnect.org.

Richard Smith

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