



NCHRP 08-183: Resource to Support Volunteer Driver Programs in Rural and Low Density Areas



Presenters:

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Rural Volunteer Driver Program Workshop

Workshop Purpose / Agenda

- To present preliminary findings from NCHRP study
 - Literature review/industry scan
 - Responses to National Surveys
 - Responses to Requests for Information
- Group activities to learn more from you!



Who is in the Audience?

Raise your hand if you:

- Are a
- State DOT,
- State Unit on Aging,
- Regional entity (MPO/RPC)
- Volunteer Driver Program
- Other entity that funds, supports or partners with a VDP
- Other?



Overview of NCHRP Project 08-183

Purpose:

Support DOTs & partners in rural/low-density areas to plan, launch, and evaluate VDPs.

Why It's Needed:

- Fills mobility gaps
- Current guidance is limited
- Agencies need scalable tools

Toolkit Will Include:

- Templates
- Evaluation metrics
- Case examples

Summary of Findings – Models

- Government-affiliated
- Transit-integrated
- Non-profit Agencies

Summary of Findings - Attributes

- Address for whom, where, when and how.
- Administration
 - Technology
- Funding
- Vehicle ownership

**existing guidebooks*



Summary of Findings – Risk Management & Liability

- Insurance – state differences
- Federal Volunteer Protection Act
- Background checks and drug testing
- Training & policies as risk mitigation

*Not as risky as you may think!

Other Findings

- Driver recruitment & retention
- Funding approaches
- Regulatory & compliance
- Planning & Implementation

**existing guidebooks*



Overview

- VDPs generally serve older adults and people with disabilities
- Insurance and liability regulation ambiguity
- Guidance for integrating VDPs into transit systems
- Comprehensive guidance on planning, development and evaluation of VDPs.
- Technology use by VDPs
- Volunteer recruitment messaging & incentives
- Standard data collection and performance measures
- National organization for support, peer learning and resources.

Stakeholder Engagement Activities

What We Did / Will Do

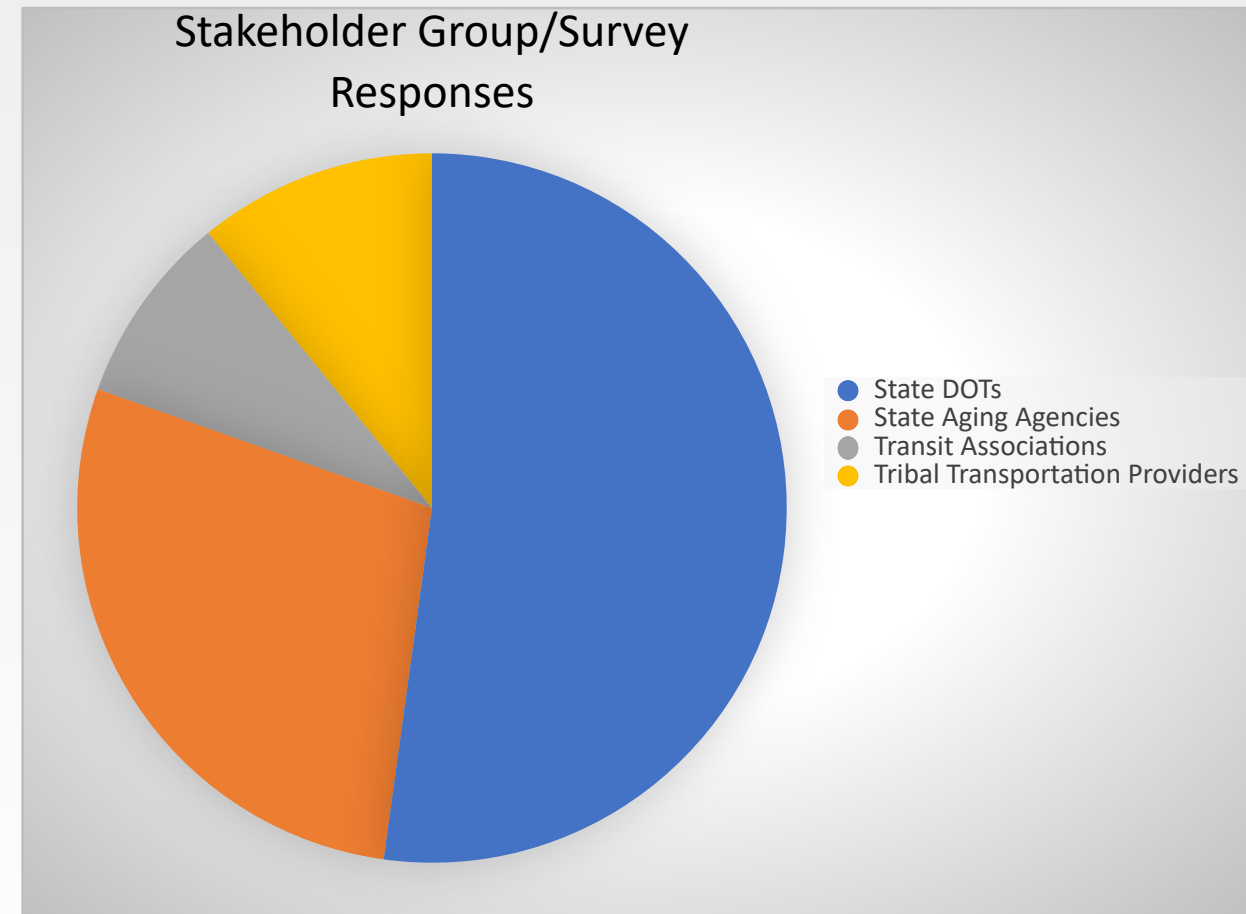
Multi-Pronged Engagement Approach:

- **Request for Information (RFI)**
Targeting active VDP providers nationwide
- **Stakeholder Surveys**
State DOTs, Aging Agencies, Transit Associations, Tribal Providers
- **Interviews & Case Studies**
With program leaders and experts for broad input



Stakeholder Engagement Activities - Respondents

- Who responded to the Survey?
 - Four separate surveys were conducted to engage different stakeholder groups involved with or supporting VDPs.
 - State DOTs (24 responses)
 - State Units on Aging (13 responses)
 - Transit associations (4 responses)
 - Tribal transportation providers (5 responses)



Stakeholder Engagement Activities - Input

Stakeholders shared input on:

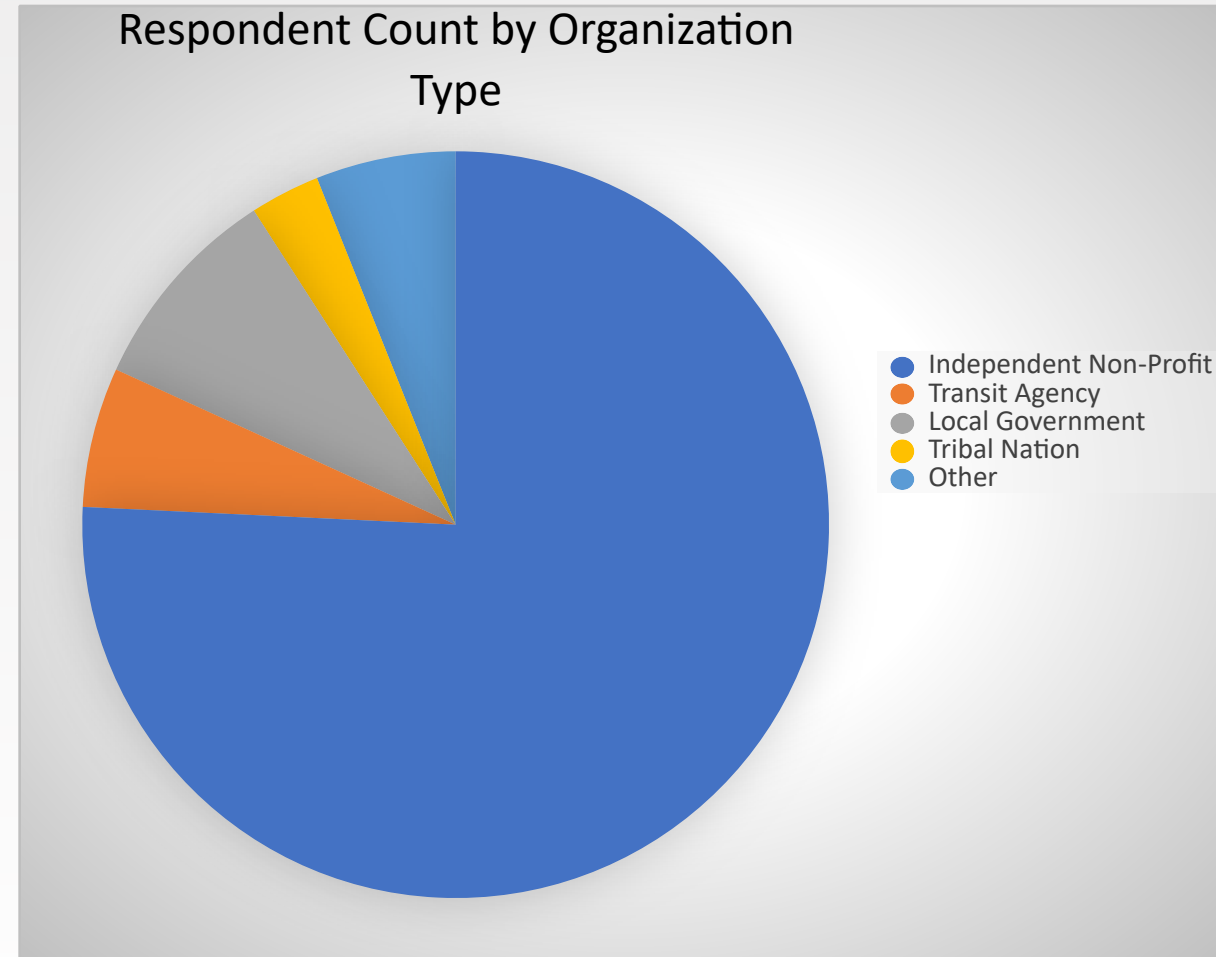
- Current involvement in VDPs
- Key barriers to success
- Types of guidance and tools needed

Common challenges identified across sectors:

- Volunteer recruitment difficulties
- Liability and insurance concerns
- Limited cross-sector coordination
- *State DOTs and aging agencies emphasized a need for standardized methods to track and evaluate program performance.*
- *Tribal providers highlighted the importance of culturally relevant solutions and challenges related to rural geography.*

Stakeholder Engagement Activities - RFI

- Who responded to the RFI (Request for Information)?
 - 35 responses received from VDPs across the U.S.
 - 76% were independent non-profits; the rest included transit agencies, local governments, and a tribal nation





Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Overall “limitations”: *What we learned thus far?*

Limited Capacity

Agencies support VDPs but often lack staff or funding to grow them.

Volunteer Recruitment

The top challenge—groups struggle to find and keep drivers.

No Standard Metrics

Need for consistent ways to measure performance and impact.

Insurance Uncertainty

Policies around volunteer coverage are often unclear.

Coordination Gaps

Aging, health, and transit services often operate in silos.

Tribal Support Needs

Cultural relevance and geography require tailored approaches.

High Demand for Tools

Stakeholders want templates, case studies, and planning guides



Stakeholder Engagement Activities

What next?

1. Continue Interviews

Conduct interviews with VDP operators and subject matter experts.

2. Expand and Finalize Case Studies

Broaden geographic and program representation and ensure diversity in program operations.

3. Develop Toolkit Components

Create templates, checklists, performance metrics, and risk management resources.

4. Pilot the Toolkit with Practitioner Feedback

Distribute to selected agencies, gather user input, and refine the tools based on feedback.

5. Submit Final Toolkit to NCHRP

Package the final toolkit and share it with DOTs, transit agencies, and community partners.

What are your thoughts?



VDP programs

Do you receive assistance from a state or regional entity?

What are your challenges?

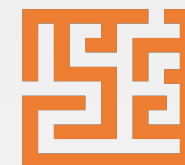


Those contemplating starting a VDP

Why are you thinking about starting or expanding your VDP?

What unmet needs do you need to meet?

What assistance will you need to start a VDP?



State DOTs/MPOs/RPCs

Are you aware of VDPs in your state/region?

How are you helping support VDPs?

How else may you be able to help a VDP?

1 Minute Activity

From the topics/issues/challenges listed earlier,
pick a topic you'd like to concentrate on.

1 minute – what topical area they want to discuss

2 Minute Activity

With the group, decide which topic you want to talk about, specifically, how you do or can you get assistance from a state/regional/umbrella organization.

2 minutes – agree to a topic you want to brainstorm

7 Minute Activity

For the topic you choose, you will answer, how can a state or regional agency help address this? It can be how they already help, could help provide a solution or a radical/shoot for the stars idea.

7 minutes - brainstorm on How a state or regional agency can help with that.

1 Minute Report Out

What topic did you pick?

How does or can a state DOT or umbrella organization help?

Wrap - Up

- Questions
- Next steps & timing on report

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