

SERVICE COORDINATORS SUPPORT MOBILITY ACCESS FOR OLDER ADULTS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING



A GUIDE PRESENTED BY

ABOUT AASC

The American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC) is a professional membership association and a national resource for service-enriched housing professionals. AASC's more than 4,000 members assist elderly and disabled residents and families living in affordable housing communities to identify, locate, and acquire the services and supports necessary to become and remain self-sufficient. Established in 1999, AASC provides education, advocacy, best practices, leadership, and networking opportunities for its members.

BACKGROUND

Service coordinators connect older adults in federally subsidized affordable housing to services and resources that keep them living in their communities. Service connections to free and low-cost transportation are the most commonly made and are vital to well-being.

These connections are vital because residents they serve are extremely low-income and often cannot afford a vehicle or the insurance and maintenance costs associated with one. Lack of access to reliable and readily available transportation puts them at risk for poor health outcomes that can lead to premature death or the need to move out of their community into a more costly institutionalized setting.

Lack of accessible transportation doesn't just lead to missed doctors' appointments and

the lower likelihood of effectively managing chronic conditions, it can also lead to social isolation, which is a health crisis of its own.

Although maintaining and improving residents' mobility is a top priority for service coordinators, they report that it's an area where they struggle to find support from outside providers. This can be for a variety of reasons, including a lack of available funding, gaps in service areas, and inconsistencies in health insurance funded transportation.

As advocates and facilitators in their communities, service coordinators stand ready to collaborate with local officials, service providers and community-based organizations to expand mobility options for low-income older adults.

Mobility Matters to Older Adults in Affordable Housing

Residents with service coordinators report having an average of four chronic medical conditions, which typically require ongoing management through health checkups, medication and lifestyle choices.

Typical HUD Section 202 residents live on fixed incomes of about \$1,000 per month.

A majority of residents live alone.



MOBILITY SUPPORT

A lack of transportation can lead to missed medical appointments, worsening chronic conditions, social isolation, food insecurity, and more. Older adults living in HUD-assisted housing with service coordination programs have the support to overcome transportation barriers that can lead to these health issues. Service Coordinators support residents in the following ways:



Arranging all types of transportation for medical, non-medical, veterans, personal, group and social purposes.



Partnering with public transportation providers to expand offerings and ensuring residents can benefit.



Advocating for age-friendly communities that include sidewalks and safe road crossings



Hosting informational meetings with transit providers to educate residents about offerings.

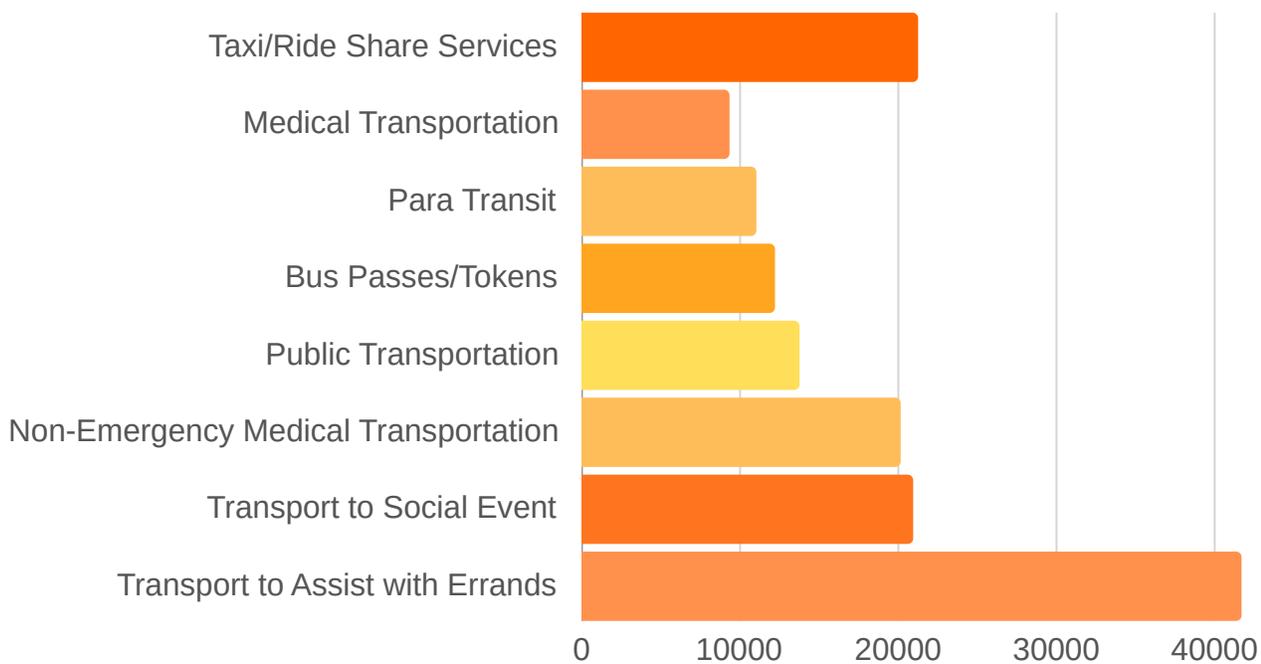


Supporting drivers by organizing driver's education/defensive training courses and assisting with vehicle insurance and registration as well as handicap placards.



Assisting residents with understanding available transit benefits through Medicare and Medicaid.

Programs and Services Facilitated by Service Coordinators



*Data represent interactions reported in AASC Online from January 1 to December 31, 2024. Approximately 75% of HUD-funded service coordinator programs track resident interactions in AASC Online.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Transportation is continually one of the most searched-for resources on behalf of residents, according to service coordinator reports and data from My Community Directory, a searchable database of community based resources that's exclusively for service coordinators and powered by Findhelp. The following examples of this work are just a snapshot of the efforts service coordinators undertake daily to ensure residents can move safely around their greater communities.

Advocating for Safe Mobility Options

At Victorian Towers in Cape May, New Jersey, residents expressed feeling unsafe because drivers often disregard posted speed limits in their small tourist city. In response, the service coordinator organized a coffee meeting between residents and the city council. This gathering provided a platform for residents to voice their concerns directly, resulting in the installation of pedestrian lights at walkways surrounding the building—an important step toward improving safety.

Similarly, at the Village at St. Peter's in Pleasantville, New Jersey, advocacy was sparked after a resident was struck by a car. The service coordinator there drafted a letter, signed by residents, urging the city to construct a walkway around the building due to frequent incidents of traffic failing to yield. This letter was sent to the mayor, and while the issue is still under review, it has brought much-needed attention to the residents' safety concerns.

Ongoing Communication with Transportation Providers is Key

When Miami Gardens, Florida began rolling out the Miami Gardens Express Trolley in 2015, the service coordinators at Robert Sharp Towers advocated for the residents to be included in the plans. Service coordinators spoke with local officials to include a stop on the route that would be near the property for seniors and persons with disability to easily access. Officials of Miami Gardens listened and incorporated a stop in front of the property for the area.

However, shortly after the trolley service began, residents reported it was difficult to get to the pickup stop location across the street with their walkers and/or wheelchairs. Service coordinators contacted the city's officials to inform them of the challenges older adults had accessing the trolley. Soon after, a ramp was installed to support residents with different needs.

In the photo to the right, a Robert Sharp Towers resident receives assistance exiting the bus.



Accessing Alternative Medical Transportation

Many low-income older adult residents are eligible for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation through Medicaid and service coordinators ensure residents are aware of and can apply for it.

However, residents report Medicaid-funded transportation can sometimes be unreliable, complicated to arrange or misaligned with medical needs. To address the medical transportation gaps these issues can cause, service coordinators often seek out alternative options as well.

At Ridgeview Village Communities in Olathe, Kansas, the service coordinator got creative to meet resident needs for non-emergency medical transport.

Many partners who provide on-site programming would bring in sugary snacks during their presentations and while thoughtful, those treats didn't always benefit residents. The service coordinator had a better idea: instead of snacks, the partners are asked to donate Uber gift cards.

The service coordinator coined this program Treats for Transportation.

When a resident needs a ride to a medical appointment and doesn't have another way to get there, the service coordinator uses the gift cards and the app on her phone to arrange reliable transportation.

The program was so beneficial that the organization's managing partner, Lakeview Village, donated \$700 per property to be used for no-cost rides to medical appointments.

Meanwhile, at Teamsters Residences in Maumee, Ohio, the service coordinator assists residents applying for free cab rides to medical appointments.

A local cab company receives funds from the Area Agency on Aging to provide these rides twice a month to individuals who qualify. The partnership began when the service coordinator read about the resource in a local newspaper and contacted the company to learn more and refer residents.



Paratransit Programs

The Municipality of Bayamón in Puerto Rico offers a Paratransit Program for residents with certified mobility challenges that transports them along a designated route to medical offices, supermarkets and retail stores from 7 a.m. – 4 p.m. on weekdays.

The service coordinator at Torre Jesús assists the residents by reviewing applications for the Paratransit Program, coordinating the initial interview appointment, arranging transportation services as needed, and conducting follow-up to ensure continuity and quality of services.

A Torre Jesús resident exits paratransit In the photo to the left.



Mobility as a Social Determinant of Health

Rides to the grocery store, hair salon or shopping mall provide much more than opportunities to cross errands off a to-do list. They serve as an opportunity to make social connections outside the walls of residents' apartments and give them purpose.

Policy makers and community leaders often think of transportation in the context of health care, employment or education. However it's equally important to consider opportunities for transportation to support social and emotional wellbeing.

The service coordinators from John Piazza, and neighboring property DINO, in California have developed a long-standing relationship with The San Bernardino County Department of Aging and Adult Services, along with Omni Bus Transportation, to provide free bus passes to residents on a month-to-month basis.

These passes are made available to older adult and disabled residents who do not drive but desire to maintain their independence and not be hindered by relying on someone else when needing transportation to medical appointments, shopping, travel and other necessary activities.

This partnership began through networking

at an Inland Empire Health Plan Resource Community meeting attended by the service coordinators and the other agencies.

In Claremont, New Hampshire, the community transit system makes seven stops at the Earl Bourdon Centre daily. The bus picks up and drops off at the front door. The service coordinator has applications on hand to assist the residents to apply for this no-cost transit. In addition, the system provides route deviation at no additional cost. The drivers are able to provide minimal assistance to residents such as opening doors, pushing wheelchairs, and assistance with boarding the vehicle. Pets are permitted on the bus as long as the pet is restrained and secured.

Across all Diocesan Housing Services Corporation properties in New Jersey, service coordinators have arranged for shopping buses to visit at least twice a week, ensuring residents have access to essential goods. These partnerships span various transportation providers in four counties with it being the service coordinator's responsibility to connect with county officials to establish ongoing transportation programs. The above photo shows a DHSC resident catching the bus in Cape May.

Transportation Partnerships Benefit Residents

Mosaico Apartments in Florida partnered with the City of Miami Transportation Department in 2022 to establish the On-Demand transportation program to get residents to the grocery store and back every Tuesday. The service is paid for through funds collected from the advertising on City Of Miami trolley vehicles and is open to all residents on the property to use.

To the left is a photo of Mosaico Apartments On-Demand Transportation Program including “Eladio,” the property’s friendly transport driver.

Wesley Living, an affordable housing provider in Tennessee, Kentucky and Arkansas, partnered with each state’s Department of Transportation to purchase buses for its older adult properties using Section 5310 funding.

In addition to the state funding for the buses, this in-house transportation program was made possible and continues to run with Reserve for Replacement funds, operating funds, and HUD Supportive Service Funds, which are available to Section 202 properties with Project Rental Assistance Contracts.



AASC is proud to partner with the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility Technical Assistance Center to educate service coordinators about the transportation resources in their communities and how to build connections with local mobility managers. CCAM-TAC’s Community Transportation Provider Map provides a simple solution for finding transportation providers nearest to affordable housing sites. AASC and CCAM-TAC collaborate under the shared goal of bringing together housing and transportation providers to improve mobility access, particularly for low-income Americans.





RESOURCES

Connecting to Housing

Find HUD affordable housing sites in your community through [HUD's Resource Locator](#). Search for elderly properties or Public Housing Authorities by zip code.



Locating Transportation

When a resident needs transportation, use CCAM-TAC's [Community Transportation Provider Map](#) to explore state and local transportation providers.



FEDERAL FUND
BRAIDING
GUIDE
MAY 2025



Funding Opportunities

Did you know U.S. Department of Transportation funding can be combined with various types of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development program funding? With 132 programs from across the Federal government eligible to fund transportation, CCAM-TAC's [Federal Fund Braiding Guide](#) can be used in many ways to help find programs that may provide funding for your transportation needs.



Making and Accepting Referrals

My Community Directory, an exclusive membership benefit provided by AASC, is a virtual resource guide for service coordinators. Powered by FindHelp, [My Community Directory](#) provides instant access to comprehensive, localized listings with hundreds of programs in every U.S. zip code. Service coordinators can locate formal and information transportation resources and make direct referrals to select providers. If you're a service provider, contact FindHelp to add your service to the directory and begin accepting referrals.

