

# **VWCCOA TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK FOR CONSUMERS**

**Address:** 220 Fox Rd, Van Wert, OH 45891

**Phone:** 419-238-5011

## **Contacts:**

**Program Manager/Transportation Manager:** Jenny Lichtenberger

**Administrative Assistant/Outreach Worker:** Samantha Turnwald

**Director:** Kevin Matthews

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

-Consumers of the VWCCOA Transportation Services must be a resident of Van Wert County

- All new clients requesting transportation service, with whom the agency is unfamiliar, must be seen by the Outreach Worker to assess and document needs. The Outreach Worker will complete a needs assessment form and client information care, and inform the client of the services available through the agency. The transportation service will be discussed with the client.

## **WHAT IS THE TRANSPORTATION SERVICE?**

-Transportation is a service designed to assist families with the transportation of person's age 60 years and older to and from needed community resources, which without such service, would otherwise jeopardize their independence or ability to remain in their own home.

-In regards to medical based appointments, the VWCCOA only provides non-emergency medical based transportation

-For those with limited English proficiency, the agency can provide assistance.

**NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE:** (see attachment)

## **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR SERVICE AND OTHER TRANSPORT PROVIDERS?**

-Van Wert County faces significant transportation options for consumers. There currently is not a taxi service, there is very limited ride-sharing services (such as Lyft or Uber) and there is no formal public transportation service. In essence the VWCCOA Transportation service provides this role for the senior citizen population in the county. With our agency serving this "public transportation role", consumers should not confuse our service for taxi service. With a taxi service, transporters have one consumer at a time. They drop them off and then immediately pick them back up.

## **IS THERE MORE THAN ONE PERSON RIDING AT A TIME and HOW LONG UNTIL I AM PICKED UP?**

-The Council on Aging transportation is transporting many consumers at a single time. For example, we may have 5 consumers at appointments at any one given time. While at times you may be able to be picked up immediately after calling the COA, for the most part consumers will most likely wait in between 20 to 30 minutes to be picked up. Some consumers just do not like to wait, which is understandable. For those looking for other "taxi service" type options, our agency is able to provide referrals to private transport companies that can provide the type of service you are looking for. Please understand that these companies charge a fee for their service.

## **HOW MUCH DOES THE SERVICE COST?**

There is no specific fee required for this service, however, as a non-profit, charitable organization we rely on donations to provide transportation service at the level we offer. Participants will be permitted to determine for themselves what they are able to contribute.

Any donations given to the driver are required to be turned in to the VWCCOA and applied to the cost of maintaining our services. Drivers are not permitted to accept tips for service. No person, otherwise eligible, will be denied service because of their inability to contribute or for not contributing.

## **TARGET POPULATION:**

-Senior Transportation is for all Van Wert County Elderly persons, with a valid need for service, however, agency guidelines specify that first consideration be given to those most in need.

-Priority will be given to those who live in their own home who are non-drivers, and/or do not have access to a vehicle in their own home (and have no network of family/friends to assist with transportation); those who are disabled, ill or isolated, frail; also clients with a low income, minorities and persons age 75 and over. Wheelchair bound consumers needing non-emergency medical transportation are provided with the greatest priority.

-Persons under the age of 60 may be transported under the following situations:

- >If their spouse is age 60 or older and are riding with them.
- >When they are rider aides or serving as client escorts.
- >If they meet eligibility criteria for contracted service with other agencies.

## **PRIORITY DESTINATIONS:**

### ***In-County***

1. Medical needs including hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation centers, doctors (family practice, specialists, dentists, chiropractors, optometrists, podiatrists, etc.). Also included are mental health needs, prescription medications, medical supplies, Van Wert County Health Department, etc.
2. Food related needs including ENS meal site, grocery shopping, application for or pick up of food stamps, food commodities, etc.
3. Essential business such as banking, legal matters, taxes, social services, interviews for employment, etc..
4. Personal shopping (examples: clothing store, discount stores, hardware store, laundromat, etc.)
5. Funeral home visitations.
6. Social and recreational needs including nursing home visitations.
7. Transportation from hospitals or nursing homes after dismissal will only be done if time allows. This also depends on the health of the client and their suitability for non-emergency medical transportation. The VWCCOA does not provide moving services for items other than what an individual can carry with them during their discharge.

## **BUMPING PROCEDURES/COMBINING OF TRIPS:**

-Clients may be asked to change the date or time of trip due to another client, in need of transportation for a destination of higher priority. The client being bumped will be notified as soon as bumping is necessary.

-To maximize transportation services, consumers may need to have their transportation combined with another trip. Consumers traveling to out of county destinations will be informed if their trips are combined.

## **OUT OF COUNTY TRANSPORTATION:**

The VWCCOA only provides Medical non-emergency rides out of the county. Trips must be within a 50 mile radius of the VW Council on Aging physical location. If space is available in the schedule, trips to the Social Security office in Lima will be permitted.

## **DIALYSIS TRANSPORTATION:**

-Prior to receiving transportation services, consumers needing transportation to dialysis will need to meet with our outreach worker. During this assessment the VWCCOA will review the overall needs of the consumer, review the consumer's plan regarding their dialysis transportation and provide input as to how the VWCCOA can assist with their transportation plan.

-As a fairness standard, Dialysis transportation consumers will be provided 4 one way trips per week. For example, Monday transportation is provided to and from Dialysis (this would be 2 one way trips), on Wednesday and Friday take consumer to dialysis (this would be 2 one way trips) which equals a total of 4 one way trips. Other considerations regarding this will be assessed during the pre-transportation outreach assessment.

**GUIDELINES FOR WHEN A CLIENT CANNOT BE TRANSPORTED:**

- The VWCCOA does not provide return transportation for individuals under anesthesia unless a caretaker is with the individual. Caretakers must be of sound mind and body.
- Do not meet Van Wert County Council on Aging eligibility standards. (Spouse or client riding with the person must be age 60 or older)
- Do not meet eligibility criteria for contracted services with other agencies.
- Are not able to wait an average of 20 to 30 minutes to be picked up after their appointment.
- Are incontinent and/or need bathroom assistance. Clients using protection such as depends and/or catheters may be transported.
- Are confused, disoriented, and/or inebriated to a degree that affects their safety or the safe transport of others, including the drivers.
- Display Disruptive Behavior; Ignore safety regulations
- Need immediate medical treatment such as an emergency as a result of an accident or illness where an EMT is needed. (Do Not Confuse Senior Transportation with Ambulance Service)
- Have been suspended from attending the VWCCOA Senior Center.
- Have an active contagious skin condition
- Have an active contagious medical condition
- Have an active bug infestation in their home
- It is suggested for safety that any client plus wheelchair or electric cart not exceed 700 lbs.
- Are wheelchair users with multiple steps and no ramp, unless a portable ramp is available and can be safely used.
- The request is for day or time when the vehicles are not in operation, including holidays, snow days, fog, break-down time, etc.
- Refuse to wear a seat belt or approved safety harness.

## **TRANSPORTATION and REALATED NEEDS NOT PERMITTED:**

A) Transporting of pets (unless it is a certified Service Dog). If it is a service dog the VWCCOA will need to know:

- Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
- What work or tasks has the dog been trained to perform or provide?

B) Out of county shopping

C) Handling of clients' money/financial transactions. Handling of client medicines.

## **RIDE ESCORTS:**

Escorts are needed when (the VWCCOA does not provide an escort service):

- A) The client has limited ambulation and needs assistance beyond the scope the driver can provide.
- B) The client needs emotional support,
- C) The client is disoriented,
- D) The client has a disability that requires assistance from an escort. Examples would be those who may be sight or hearing impaired.

## **SCHEDULING OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES:**

1. Schedule for specific appointment may be done up to 3 months in advance .
  - Out-of-County transportation** should be scheduled at least 2 weeks in advance. Out of Town trip requests fill very quickly and are limited to schedule availability and the agency's annual budget constraints.
  - In County Transportation** should be done with at least 48 hours' notice. If client is unable to provide 48 hours' notice, they will be taken to the destination if driving time and van space are available.
2. Van service is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m..  
Doctors' appointments should not be scheduled after 2:30 p.m. to ensure a ride home after the appointment.
3. All appointments must be made through the Council on Aging office and will be assigned to one of our drivers.
4. Information needed when Scheduling will be: -name of client, address, phone number, destination address and building suite #, date and time of appointment, and time you would like picked up. Drivers will not make assignments on their own and will require that clients call the Council on Aging office for all transportation scheduling.
5. The Council on Aging will accept appointments for all services as long as there are available openings within the day's schedule. When the schedules are full, requests will not be accommodated to avoid crowding of schedule, resulting in poor service and unhappy consumers. The consumer is responsible for arranging appointments with their medical provider.

6. **First priority** is given to clients requiring medical transportation, who are in wheelchairs. **Second priority** is medical appointments with no wheelchairs. **Third priority** is all other appointments that are essential to a person residing in their own home. If necessary, clients will be asked to share rides to medical appointments, grocery store, shopping center, etc. if there is more than one client going that way. The same is true for out-of-county trips, even though an extended wait may be necessary at times.
7. When Scheduling, the client should advise the office of any and all stops that are to be made in the scheduled trip. These will be written on the drivers schedules and only scheduled stops will be accommodated.
8. To allow for ample time on the schedule, the client should specify if they use an assistive device such as a wheelchair, walker, or cane.
9. Consumers must be dressed and ready to transport when the driver arrives. If the consumer is not ready for pick up when the driver arrives, they may have to leave to keep on their schedule and the consumer can contact the Council on Aging to reschedule.
10. If the client does not respond to the driver knocking on their door, the driver will contact the COA to have the Transportation Manager telephone the client. If the Transportation Manager cannot reach the client by phone, the client card will be used to notify the emergency contact that is listed. If the emergency contact cannot be reached within a reasonable amount of time, then the Transportation Manager in consultation with the Director will contact the local police department for a wellness check
11. Clients must call when appointments are finished and pick up is necessary. Delays cannot be avoided, at times, due to the busy schedule. Do not ask the driver to sit and wait for you- this is not allowed. Average wait time to be picked up after an appointment is 20-30 minutes.
12. The Council on Aging has the right to cancel all trips that have been arranged, in the event of bad weather and unsafe driving conditions. Trips also may need to be cancelled due to vehicle break down, illness of drivers, or other unforeseen circumstances and if a client does not have a safe pathway to their door during winter months.
13. Excessive no call/no show on scheduled trips will be addressed with the consumer.

### **ENTERING HOMES:**

-Drivers may enter homes of clients who are wheelchair users and any others who need driver assistance, e.g., carry in groceries, assist with coat, lock or unlock doors, etc.

-Drivers are not responsible for physically lifting clients to and from beds, chairs, or wheelchairs.

-Drivers are not responsible for handling of or changing personal equipment of clients such as portable oxygen machines. It will be the determination of the Transportation Manager and Director, after consultation with the family or organization, as to the transportation of clients with special needs and whether it is within the scope of

transportation services offered. Escorts may be needed for those with medical equipment (see Escort section above).

### **STEPS (Wheelchair Users):**

- A: The Van Wert County Council on Aging may require that a ramp be built before transporting, or if transport has begun, before continuing the service. We can provide agencies that assist with ramp building.
- B: The Van Wert County Council on Aging may require the assistance of a family member for clients who are wheelchair users.
- C: Drivers have discretion to postpone the trip if they do not have assistance, and feel that the steps cannot be safely negotiated without assistance. Drivers are not permitted to “bump” wheelchairs up or down steps.
- D: If the driver evaluates the entry of the home and feels that it is unsafe to navigate a person in a wheelchair or assistive device, the transport will not be conducted.
- E: These guidelines do not address all contingencies that may be encountered. The driver is expected to use good judgment in each situation, to the best of his/her ability.

### **CLIENT SUSPENSION FROM TRANSPORTATION SERVICES:**

Realizing the importance of safety at all times, van riders have the responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner which permits the safety of themselves and others riding the van. If a consumer is suspended from Transportation Service, it may also result in the suspension of other COA services during the suspension period.

#### **Suspension for Disruptive Behavior**

- A: Disruptive behavior shall be sufficient reason for suspension from COA transportation services.
- B: Disruptive behavior shall include, but not necessarily limited to the following: complaining and berating of agency staff or agency protocols, physical fighting, verbal loud arguing, excessive use of profanity, violent or bullying/abusive behavior or threats of such behavior to participants, clients and/or agency staff, immoral conduct, theft, criminal behavior and destruction of agency property.

#### **Suspension for Other Reasons**

- A: Extreme lack of normal hygiene and health habits is a valid reason for suspension.
  - 1. The Van Wert COA will work with the consumer in making referrals to the home health department, visiting nurses, or other applicable agencies to assist in personal cleanliness before authorizing the suspension.

2. When regular meal participants can no longer ride the van for reasons of incontinence, a referral to PSA3 for home based services will be provided.

B: Refusal to follow safety rules will result in suspension.

C: Harassment or bullying of employees or other clients will result in suspension of all services.

D: Slander or libelous statements made against the agency will result in suspension.

E: Disruptive behavior in the center or at any of its designated activities or functions could result in suspension from all services.

F. A health condition that creates an unsafe environment when around others.

G. A bug infestation at the consumer's home. Client will be referred to Job & Family Services for assistance with the issue.

G: The policy and procedure committee which formulated these policies realizes that other unacceptable circumstances may occur which might result in temporary disbarment from the agency or its services. Each case is to be decided judiciously, based upon the circumstances.

**The following procedures shall govern such suspension:**

1. The Director shall notify the client. The discussion shall include:
  - a. A full explanation of the reasons for suspension,
  - b. The length of the transportation suspension is left to the Director's discretion. The Director has the authority to permanently ban a consumer from transportation if a type of behavior warrants such action.
  - c. The next date that transportation will be provided.
2. Appeal Process
  - a. The client must contact the Director in writing , within 10 working days, and request a hearing with the Board of Director's Personnel/Policy Committee. If assistance in writing the appeal letter is needed contact the COA for assistance.

Send to: VWCCOA, Attn: Director  
220 Fox Rd.  
Van Wert, OH 45891
  - b. If unresolved, the client must contact the Ombudsman program within 10 working days. If assistance in writing the appeal letter is needed contact the COA for assistance.

Send to: PSA3, Attn: Ombudsman  
892 S Cable Rd., #A  
Lima, OH 45805