

Chelmsford Supplemental Volunteer Transportation Program FAQs

1. Are there other towns successfully running volunteer transportation programs?

Yes! Northern Essex Elder Transport (NEET) has been serving 14 communities in the Merrimack Valley since 1981! NEET's volunteer drivers have driven over 2 million miles to provide service to clients. (<https://www.driveforneet.org/about>)

MA Mobility Management lists other similar, successful volunteer driver programs which can be found here: [Profiles of Successful Programs - MassDOT Volunteer Drivers](#)

Not only are these programs successful, they also have proven safety records!

2. How will Chelmsford's Supplemental Volunteer Transport Program address the issue of liability?

Our program will follow all of the same protocols that the Senior Center's transport program follows. Volunteer drivers will be CORI checked, have driver safety checks, and receive similar safety training to what the Senior Center drivers undergo. We also plan to utilize a Rider Release & Waiver of Liability and Indemnity Agreement similar to the one NEET uses, which is attached to this packet.

3. What about gas and maintenance costs for vehicles? Won't this be expensive?

The Supplemental Volunteer Transport Program will utilize 2 town-owned sedans that are due to be phased out of operations. We have generously estimated the cost of maintenance for these vehicles to be similar to what the Senior Center budgets annually (\$5,000) for maintenance of their vehicles, which include 2 transport vans and 2 sedans. Additionally, the Senior Center's average annual gas costs for their 4 vehicles are \$10,000. We have budgeted \$8,500 for our 2 vehicles, which we feel is very generous.

4. How exactly will you use requested ARPA funding?

A proposed year 1 operating budget has been attached to this packet. As you will see, we will need start-up costs for the hiring of a part-time program manager/dispatcher and purchase of dispatcher software (which will also be accessible to the Senior Center transport dispatcher). ARPA funding will allow us to get this program up and running for the first year as we seek additional sources of funding which may include, but are not limited to, grant funding, local bank donations, local business donations, area hospital donations, and other philanthropic entities. During the first year of operation, we will conduct program evaluation to examine how the program can become more efficient and better serve the community. The collection of data will allow us to pursue more funding opportunities, as funders like to see examples of successful programs.

The \$100,000 in ARPA funding request will carry the program through nearly 3 years of operation. This will allow time for the collection of data and pursuit of future funding.