

Recovery and Job Access Transportation Initiative - Summary

Background - On March 22, 2018 Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) was invited to the monthly meeting of the Recovery Strategies Committee of the Governor's Opioid Coordination Council (OCC) to discuss transportation services for those struggling with addiction. While we provided an overview of the standard route and demand-response services, the discussion quickly moved to the type of critical needs not accessible through the current system. Trips to essential services such as group meetings, Recovery Centers, drug test sites, job training and access, were highlighted and we were asked to form a Recovery Transportation Working Group with several members of the OCC.

Service Needs - Through surveys, discussions, and data received, the working group identified the following needs not covered by current programs (or existing gaps in service):

- Group Meetings and Therapy sessions
- Access to Recover Centers
- Access to Drug Test sites
- Medical Appointments
- Job Access (training, interviews, and initial commutes)

The nexus between trips to assist recovery and to gain employment is directly related and we must strive to help all vulnerable Vermonters struggling with transportation to access the above services. Providing these services for anyone in Vermont addresses important aspects of recovery, including prevention, providing resilience, and hope for those at the lower end of the economic spectrum.

Service Capacity - Given these needs, we approached our partners and asked for estimates on the potential demand for these types of trips. Collectively, the transit entities project they will provide 569,535 demand response trips in SFY 2018. They also suggest the system could provide an additional 2,500 -3,000 trips per month. This considers some anticipated trip coordination and scheduling efficiencies and capacity varied widely between providers. **In summary, the Working Group estimates the transit providers could provide at least 800-1000 trips per month for recovery services and/or job access opportunities.**

Costs - Due to variations in population densities, service ratios, etc., these can range from \$17-\$36 per trip, and given the likely distances and scheduling efficiencies, we estimate the average per trip cost would be between \$20-\$25 per trip. The partners indicate roughly 1,000 trips would cost approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000 per month.

Working Group Recommendations:

1. Regional Coordination Meetings. Using the Northwestern Medical Center's successful pilot project, ensuring eligible trips are being scheduled and all regional entities are in communication regarding demand and services.
2. Launch an expanded demand response program, as described above
3. Seek funds for vehicles for the recovery centers and service providers through grant opportunities
4. Recovery Coaches and case workers should consider joining their regional volunteer driver network. Volunteers provide about 40% of all demand response trips in Vermont, and these volunteer drivers could maximize the valuable "windshield time" with clients coming to and from recovery services.