

DEMAND RESPONSE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

ELAINE HAYTKO

JIM MOULTON

CALEB GRANT

ROSS MACDONALD

STEPHEN FALBEL

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Demand Response (Dial-a-Ride) Transportation

- Appropriate for rural areas without enough population density to support a bus route and for people who are not able to use bus services because of disabilities or their specific travel needs
- How does it work?
 - People call transit provider to request a ride
 - Call center representatives determine eligibility and best way to provide ride
 - Approved rides assigned to volunteer drivers or agency vans
 - In most cases, riders are reminded about reservation through automated calls
 - Rides are provided
 - Funds are drawn down from chosen source to reimburse volunteers and pay agency expenses

Funding Sources

- Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program (O&D)
 - 80% federal funds (from FTA Section 5311, supplemented by flexed FHWA)
 - 20% local funds which can include in-kind match (value of volunteer hours)
- Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT or Medicaid)
 - Approximately 56/44 federal/state split
 - Program managed by VPTA under contract to DVHA
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Complementary Paratransit
 - Up to 50% federal funds (Section 5307 in urban area, 5311 in rural areas)
 - 50% non-federal funds (could include state, but for GMT, all match is all municipal funds)
 - 88% of ADA rides in Vermont are in Burlington metro area
- Recovery and Job Access (RJA)
 - 50% federal funds (originally Section 5312, now Section 5311)
 - 50% state funds, split evenly between VTrans and AHS
- Private Pay – riders pay the full cost of the ride directly

What about Medicare?

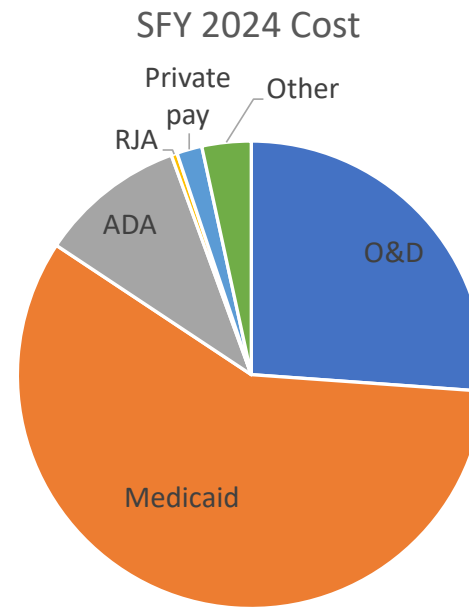
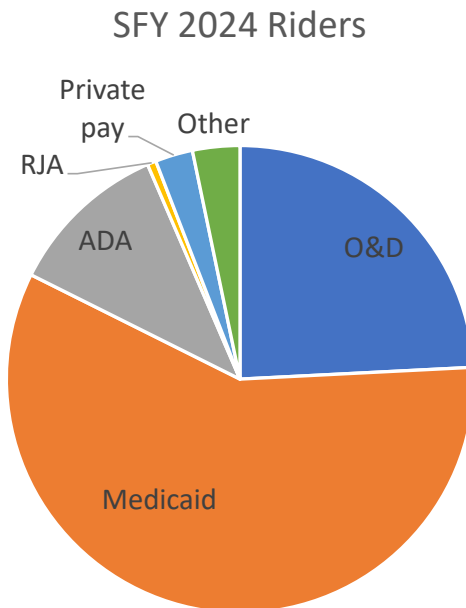
- Unlike Medicaid, Medicare has no robust transportation benefit
 - Parts A & B have minimal transportation benefits
 - Medicare Advantage plans offer some coverage of transportation but have higher premiums so that only more affluent people (who are unlikely to use public transit) have them
- People who are covered by Medicare but cannot afford their own transportation receive rides primarily through the O&D program or by ADA paratransit if they have a certified disability

Administrative Tasks

- Demand Response transportation involves much more administrative work than regular bus service
 - Call center staff/dispatcher determines eligibility
 - Rides are matched to least-cost and most-appropriate mode
 - Bus route (whenever possible)
 - Volunteer driver
 - Agency van
 - Taxi
 - All attempts are made to coordinate rides in a shared vehicle trip
 - Funding limitations force staff to prioritize rides
 - Medicaid (NEMT) is the priority (entitlement program)
 - Critical care (kidney dialysis, cancer treatment)
 - Adult day
 - Other medical appointments
 - Grocery shopping and pharmacy
 - Other errands and social trips
- Medicaid program has by far the greatest administrative burden for eligibility and trip verification

Demand Response Transportation in Vermont

- In SFY 2024, demand response programs carried about 530,500 riders and cost about \$26.6 million, for a cost per ride of about \$50



SFY 2024 Statistics by Funding Source

Program	Rides	Cost	Cost per Ride
Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities (O&D)	129,967	\$6,867,072	\$52.84
Medicaid	312,575	\$15,301,847	\$48.95
Americans with Disabilities Act Paratransit (ADA)	59,824	\$2,662,143	\$44.50
Recovery and Job Access (RJA)	3,316	\$106,798	\$32.21
Private Pay	13,904	\$457,447	\$32.90
Other	17,638	\$894,633	\$50.72

Access to Healthcare

- Overwhelming majority of demand response trips are for access to healthcare services (including adult day programs)
 - 100% of NEMT trips
 - 38% of all NEMT trips were for opioid treatment
 - 16% of all NEMT trips were for adult day
 - Remaining 46% were for other medical purposes
 - 69% of O&D trips
 - 39% for medical trips
 - 16% for critical care
 - 15% for adult day
 - 42% of ADA trips
 - 60% of RJA trips (for recovery treatment)
- Overall share for all demand response programs is roughly 80%

O&D Program Historical Trend

Year	Riders	Total Cost	Federal Cost	Cost per trip
2024	129,967	\$6,867,072	\$5,727,551	\$52.84
2023	112,112	\$6,651,059	\$5,343,422	\$59.33
2022	107,580	\$5,116,373	\$4,751,189	\$47.56
2021	90,160	\$4,496,660	\$3,668,402	\$49.87
2020	151,051	\$4,721,086	\$3,865,006	\$31.25
2019	184,351	\$4,646,026	\$4,090,248	\$25.20

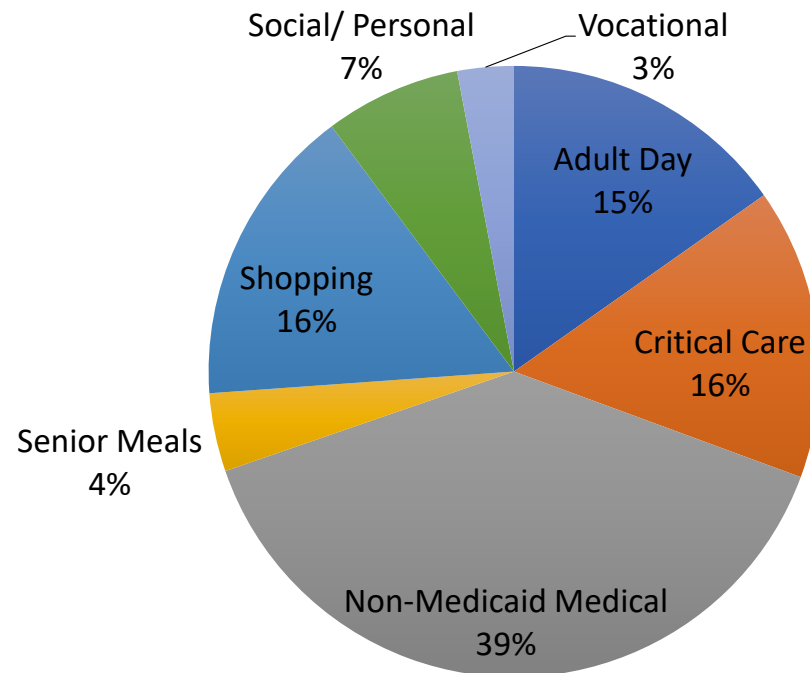
In-kind Local Match

- Providers are permitted to use the value of volunteer driver hours (calculated using the average wage for bus drivers at that provider) as in-kind match for the O&D program
- Some agencies use in-kind for all of the 20% local match required, while others use some cash and some in-kind match
- Use of in-kind match means that federal funds pay for more than 80% of the cash cost of the program; up to 100% for some providers

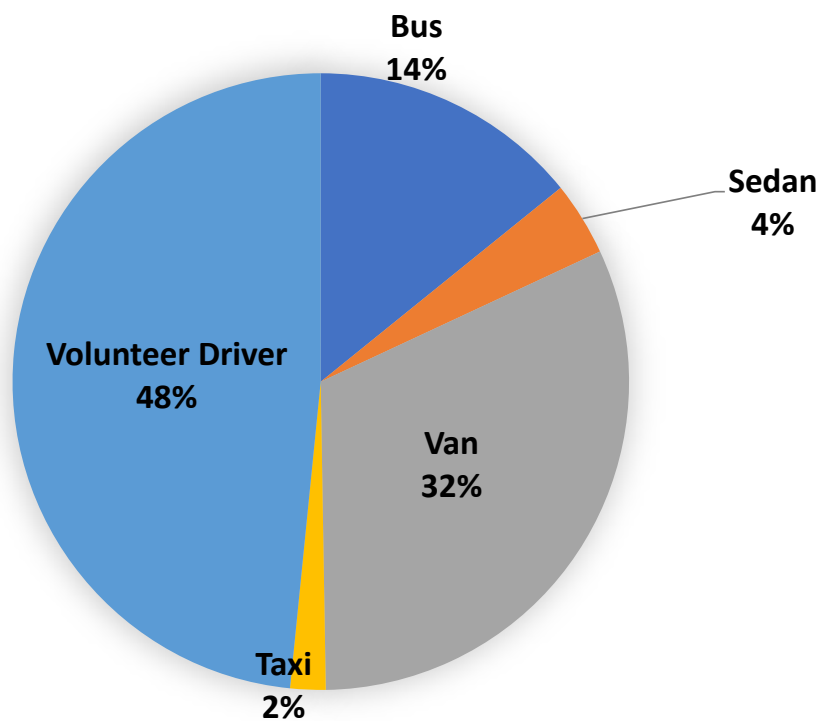
Trip Length and Time

- In SFY 2024, the nearly 130,000 O&D trips consumed over 104,000 vehicle hours and over 3.2 million vehicle miles
- The average O&D trip took 45 minutes and travelled 23.9 miles
- Critical care trips in the O&D program, mostly for dialysis or cancer treatment, tend to be longer and more expensive trips

Purposes of O&D Trips

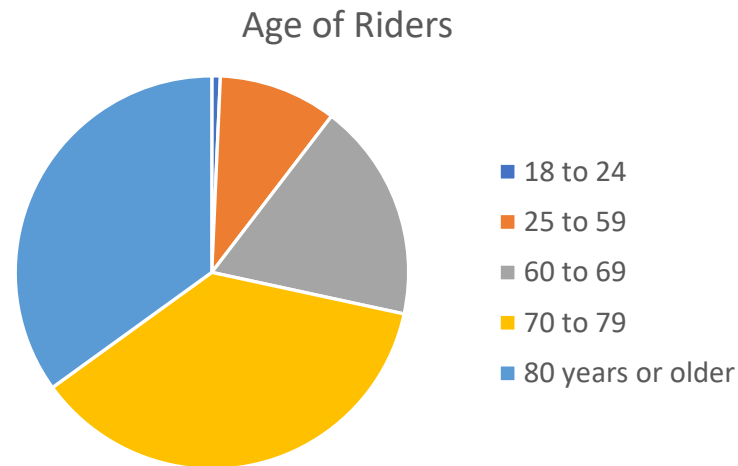


Travel Modes for O&D Trips



2024 Survey of Demand Response Riders

- Riders very satisfied overall: 9.1 rating out of 10
- 89% said agency has met needs “extremely well” or “very well”
- 89% agree (60% strongly agree) that the demand response service is “important to maintain my health and well-being”
- 90% of demand response riders are over the age of 60



Ways to Improve Service

What would make it easier for you to utilize demand response service?

