



Senior Centers and Ridesharing

A TOOLKIT TO IMPLEMENT RIDESHARING

JULY 2020

Three accredited senior centers share lessons learned and resources developed during a pilot that incorporated ridesharing into their transportation strategy.

ncoa
National Institute of
Senior Centers

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Introduction

Working together, NCOA and Lyft introduced ridesharing as a convenient and affordable way for older adults to stay connected while promoting their local senior center, so they can enroll in programs to enhance their well-being, health, and independence. This partnership addressed both organizations' objectives—Lyft seeks to bring its innovative service to more older adults, and NCOA seeks to enable more older adults to visit and participate in programs in their local senior center that improve their overall well-being and reduce social isolation.

In February 2019, NCOA and Lyft enlisted the help of three nationally accredited senior centers to creatively implement a Lyft ridesharing pilot into their current transportation program. The goal was to engage, educate, and encourage center members and socially isolated community members to try out ridesharing options.

Each site received technical training to implement Lyft features. They hosted educational sessions on the use of Lyft Ridesharing, marketed transportation options to participants, and created innovative methods to successfully implement the ridesharing program at their senior center.

The participants from each site completed baseline and post-test surveys. The program ran for three months, during which participants had access to Lyft rideshare services and associated training.

Each senior center had different transportation components in place prior to beginning the pilot. In addition to other transportation methods, two sites had already used Lyft Concierge, while one site added Lyft to their resources. The lessons learned and insights gained after this pilot are shared in this toolkit.



“It’s just a peace of mind to know I have an affordable option at my fingertips.”

Meet the Sites

The **Brookline Senior Center and Council on Aging, MA**, provides a wide range of programs and services in health, learning, arts, socialization, nutrition, and recreation. They are available Monday through Friday with occasional evening and weekend programming. In FY 2019, they served over 3,100 (unduplicated) seniors from Brookline and adjacent towns. Almost 400 people, many older adults, volunteer at the center each year. The senior center building houses the municipal Council on Aging and the nonprofit Brookline Multi-Service Senior Center Corporation (BMSSCC), which raises funds above the town's budget. Many of our programs are designed to help low-income seniors (aged 60+), including outreach to older adults in public housing. Most participants, especially women, are financially insecure. Nearly 88% of town seniors live at or below the poverty line and 21% qualify as low-income.

Jewish Family Service, **Aging and Wellness Division, San Diego, CA**, implemented the pilot at two senior centers, the Ed Brown Senior Center (EBSC) and the College Avenue Center (CAC). They both rely on the same transportation program, On the Go: Transportation Solutions for Older Adults.

Opened in 1989, EBSC is located in the San Diego neighborhood of Rancho Bernardo. Rancho Bernardo is home to 40,000 residents and is approximately 25 miles from downtown San Diego. The senior center physically resides in the Rancho Bernardo Community Park, which also houses a recreation center, sports fields, tennis courts, and lawn bowling. EBSC serves nearly 400 active members in addition to providing services for the community at large. The center offers 20 different exercise classes, social activities, Bingo, a computer lab, professional consultations, and discussion groups.

Opened in 1999, the College Avenue Center is located in the San Diego neighborhood of Del Cerro, home to 30,000 people. It is approximately 12 miles from downtown San Diego. The senior center physically resides inside of Temple Emanu-El and uses their social hall, meeting rooms, and industrial kitchen five days a week. CAC has over 420 active participants and offers a stimulating mix of games, workshops, live music and entertainment, discussion groups, dancing, guest speakers, films, cultural events, holiday celebrations, and computer classes. In addition to mentally stimulating activities, CAC emphasizes healthy aging by offering nutritious hot lunches, daily exercise and fitness classes, nutrition workshops, and regular screenings to support mind-body wellness.

The **Newington Senior and Disabled Center, Newington, CT**, is in a suburb of Hartford with just under 30,000 people. Its mission is to improve the well-being of older adults and adults with disabilities in the Town of Newington. The center defines well-being across 8 dimensions, including: physical, emotional, financial, spiritual, social, environmental, and intellectual. The center offers more than 200 programs and activities each month, as well as providing robust information and referral and social casework.

The facility has 25,000 square feet of usable space, which includes an auditorium, cafeteria, information and referral center, fitness center, and several classrooms and meeting rooms. There is open public Wi-Fi throughout the building, as well as a technology center with five internet connected computers available to the public.

Background

Lyft

Lyft is a rideshare company that operates a transportation platform that connects passengers with drivers. The company designs, markets, and operates a mobile application that matches drivers with passengers who request rides and also allows payment through the app. It also allows riders to schedule rides up to seven days in advance.

NCOA

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is a respected national leader and trusted partner to help people aged 60+ meet the challenges of aging. Our mission is to improve the lives of millions of older adults, especially those who are struggling. Through innovative community programs and services, online help, and advocacy, NCOA is partnering with nonprofit organizations, government, and business to improve the health and economic security of 40 million older adults by 2030. Learn more at ncoa.org and @NCOAging.

National Institute of Senior Centers

NCOA's National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) supports a national network of over 3,000 senior center professionals dedicated to helping older adults remain active, engaged, and independent in their communities. NISC is setting the standard for the future of senior centers by promoting research, promising practices, professional development, and advocacy. NISC also offers the nation's only National Senior Center Accreditation Program. Learn more at ncoa.org/NISC.

Getting Started

Lyft Technology Options

LYFT CONCIERGE

Have you ever needed to arrange a ride for your participants but didn't know exactly when they would need it? Examples include when a participant has to get home after a doctor's appointment or an individual who would like to attend an impromptu lunch with friends. Lyft Concierge enables your senior center to supplement your current transportation system while affording greater flexibility and choice for the older adult.

Trained senior center transportation staff will remotely manage rides for older adults. They can schedule and cover the cost of a ride that participants can request for themselves. When someone runs out of groceries, wants to come to the center for a special event or has an unexpected doctor's appointment, Lyft's flexible rides feature enables their ride to be ready when they are.

LYFT APP

Participants can also download the Lyft App and book their own rides. Providing educational classes at your center is a needed component. It is helpful for those learning to use the Lyft app to have specific training related to their type of phone. To avoid confusion, two different classes, one for Android users and one for Apple users, is recommended. Individuals also may need to become more familiar with their smartphones and may benefit from a beginner educational phone class.

Who Are Your Participants?

The specific type of Lyft technology that was most successful at each site centered on a few things, including whether the participant had prior experience with using rideshare, whether they had a smart phone and knew how to use it, and whether they still drove their own car.

At the San Diego sites, most of the grant participants used the Concierge service. Many of the participants did not have a smart phone or didn't know how to use one, so being able to call for a ride made a big difference. The participants also liked the fact that someone else was assisting them with their ride and monitoring it in real time.

Participants at the Brookline site primarily used the Lyft app, which requires users to book their own rides. The Brookline population appears to be particularly tech-savvy, with 90% owning a smartphone with internet and email.

For sites like Newington with a high percentage of participants still driving, insufficient knowledge about how to use the app was the greatest barrier to usage. And while these older adults did not need ridesharing now, they wanted to learn how to use it to be prepared for the future.

Creating Your Senior Center Lyft Business Account

Through the [Lyft Business Portal](#), you have control over how your organization uses Lyft Business, such as inviting new employees to join your organization and creating a Business Profile, inviting employees to become a Concierge agent, and much more.

To create a Lyft Business account, you'll need:

- Your work email address
- The phone number tied to your personal Lyft account to verify your identity

If you don't have an existing Lyft account, you'll be asked to create one upon logging in to the Business Portal. Please use a phone number that can receive SMS text messages.

Why do we need your mobile phone number associated with your personal Lyft account?

By asking you to provide your mobile phone number associated with your personal Lyft account, we can verify your identity and use 2-step verification to recognize you when you log in to the Business Portal. You don't need to create a password or use your email for logging in — you simply enter the verification code sent to your mobile phone number tied to your personal Lyft account.

Follow the steps below to create your Lyft Business account:

- 1) Fill out your information [here](#) and be sure to enter your work email address.
- 2) Click Submit.

A member from our team will contact you to make sure your Lyft Business products are enabled and set up properly. You can continue to set up and access the Lyft Business Portal in the meantime!

- 3) Click Continue Set Up.
- 4) On the next screen, enter your organization's name.
- 5) Select your organization's size.
- 6) Enter your work email address one more time.
- 7) Check the box for "I accept the Terms of Service" and click Next.
- 8) An email will be sent to your work email address letting you know that you can claim your organization's Business Account and become its administrator. Click "Let's go!" in the email.
- 9) In the window that opens up, enter in the phone number associated with your personal Lyft account and click Next. If you do not have an existing Lyft account, enter your mobile phone number that can receive SMS text messages and you'll be prompted to create a Lyft account.
- 10) Enter the verification code sent to your mobile phone and click Next again.
- 11) The next screen will ask you to verify your Lyft account by asking, "Are you (your name)?" Make sure the name on this screen matches your name on your Lyft account and click "This is my account."
- 12) Enter the email address associated with your personal Lyft account for the final step of identity verification.
- 13) You're in! Moving forward, you can visit <https://www.lyft.com/business/login/> to log in to your organization's Business Portal and only need to enter in your mobile phone number associated with your personal Lyft account and the verification code sent to your mobile phone.

Set Up Lyft Concierge for Your Senior Center

Your designated Concierge agents can request and manage rides for whoever you need to move — even if the people you’re moving don’t have smartphones. While your agents aren’t quite super spies, they’re just as helpful.

What’s a Concierge agent?

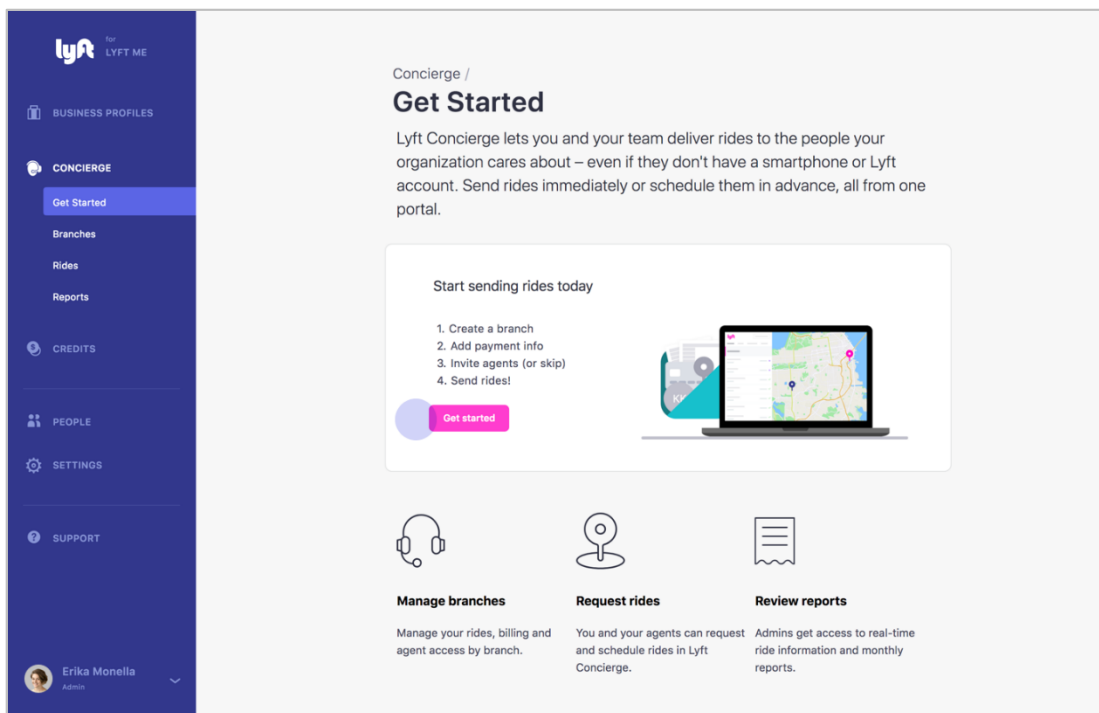
A Concierge agent is someone who is authorized to send rides on behalf of your organization. Learn more about agent permissions and access.

Granting access to the Concierge tab is easy and should only take a few steps. Administrators can choose to bulk import employees and grant access or edit employee permissions one at a time.

Get started with these simple steps:

1) Create a Concierge branch.

After you sign up for a Lyft Business account, log in to the [Lyft Business Portal](https://www.lyft.com/business/login) (or at [lyft.com/business/login](https://www.lyft.com/business/login)). From there, click Concierge and then Get Started.



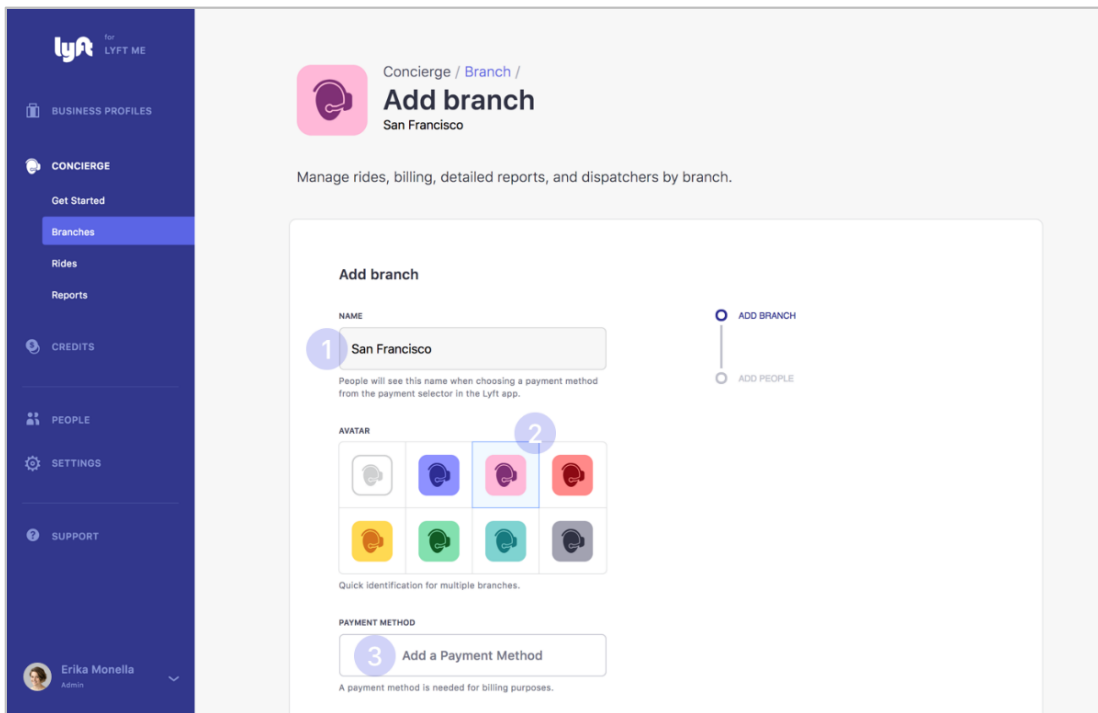
Here, you’ll create your first Concierge branch.

What are branches?

A “branch” refers to each subset of agents who use Concierge within a parent organization’s Lyft Business account. An organization may have one or multiple branches, and each branch may have its own agents, billing, and reporting. For example, an organization with multiple senior centers could have a different branch set up for each of its locations.

2) Customize your branch.

Give it a name, avatar color, and customize your branch options.



3) Add a payment method.

Add your preferred payment method that will be charged when you request rides through Concierge.

4) Add any desired advanced options.

Concierge also offers advanced settings. Click Show more to explore all options.

Ride reports are sent to your administrator email address by default. If you'd like them to be sent to another person on your team, like an accountant or finance manager, you can add their email here.

You can also optionally require that your agents add an internal note before they can request a ride.

5) Invite agents (or skip).

If you have team members that will be sending Lyft rides on behalf of your organization, you can invite them to this Concierge branch. There's no limit to how many agents you can invite. If you have a large team, you can upload a CSV to make this step faster.

Note: Do NOT add new agents under the People tab. This will not add them correctly.

6) Open Lyft Concierge.

After clicking save, you can begin sending rides. Just click the link in the confirmation banner to open the Concierge tool, and you're ready to go!

Lyft Educational Resources

More and more older adults have smartphones and are able to use the technology. Ridesharing is a great way for older adults to access transportation services, often where it did not exist before. For some, it may require some additional training, but many can have success with just a small amount of support.

Go to ncoa.org/NISC and select the Senior Center Program tab to find the [Lyft Toolkit](#) page. Here you can download resources to help you easily train staff and participants.

Resources Available

Lyft Concierge at your Senior Center PowerPoint Template:
Customize this PowerPoint presentation to add your senior center transportation specifics. This presentation includes an overview of how the Concierge system will work at your center.

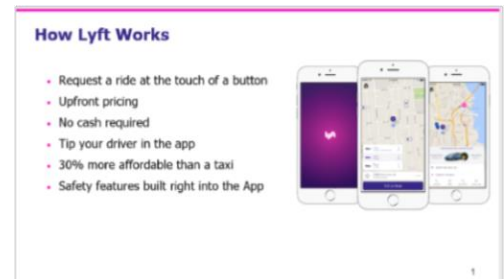
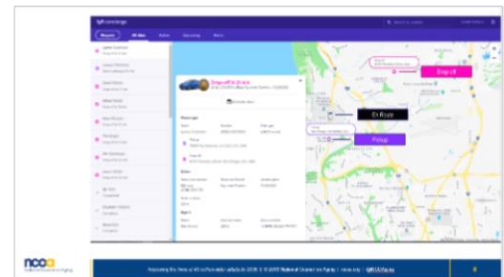
This template was produced by following the Jewish Family Services Ridesharing PowerPoint.

The Lyft Smart Phone Class Slides PowerPoint includes a step-by-step guide to educating an older adult on how to download and use the Lyft app. The PowerPoint includes:

- Policies that Protect Drivers and Passengers
- How to Install the Lyft App
 - > Find Lyft on Google Play
 - > Find Lyft on App Store
 - > Installing the Lyft App
- How to Get a Ride!
 - > Set Your Pick-Up; Set Your Destination and Ride Mode & Reminder Policies to Protect Passengers

Lyft is for Everyone brochure:

Download and print this tri-fold brochure for a great educational takeaway. Participants will understand what Lyft is, how to use it, safety considerations, and how this service is being used today by older adults.



Ready Set Ride Hail!

This 14-page detailed brochure offers step-by-step directions on how to use the Lyft app. In addition to walking you through each step, it includes rider tips.

This brochure was developed by the Transportation Resources, Information Planning and Partnerships for Seniors (TRIPPS) and The Brookline MA, Council on Aging.

Download and print back to back and fold in the middle.

Ready, Set! Ride Hail!

Here are some tips for a comfortable ride:

- You can call from indoors, but be ready!**
An indoor location, reduces time spent waiting on the street. But, the vehicles will come quickly and will not wait more than a few minutes.
- Request your ride from a safe place**
Choose a pickup spot where your driver can easily pull over. (This means no bus stops or other no stopping zones.) Sometimes you will have to walk to a safe spot, instead of standing where you exit the building.
- Check the License Plate, Car Make and Model and Driver's Name**
Always do these safety steps before you enter a vehicle. Match these with what you see in your app.
- Pick the best size vehicle for your travel**
You may use a standard four door Lyft vehicle most of the time. But, there are lots of different vehicle choices for luxury cars, big groups, or extra luggage. And, consider taking a shared ride. The trip will cost less, you might meet a new friend, and you will help to reduce the number of vehicles on the road. It might take a few more minutes, but the app you let you know the estimated time.
- Send your trip info to loved ones**
You'll find this option in the safety features and you'll need to enter the smart phone number of this designated person. They'll see your location in real-time.
- Sometimes driver's take a different route**
Keep the app open as you travel in the vehicle. You will be able to check out the driver's route to see how you're getting to your destination. There are reasons why the driver might be traveling on a route you are less familiar with: a detour, too much traffic, or a shortcut. If you feel uncomfortable, ask the driver.

Step 1
Open the Ride Hail App
Tap the icon for Lyft with your finger. It should open. You will see a screen that looks like a road map. Let's take some time to look at that screen together.
The map shows streets that are closest to where you are and it may also show Lyft vehicles in the area. You can see each vehicle on the map. You will not pick an individual vehicle. Lyft will match you with the next available driver.
In the middle of the screen you will see text that says, "Where are you going?" and beneath it, a box that says "Search Destination." Tap on it.

Page 13

Use this Lyft and Learn flyer template to develop a poster for your educational session.

Developed by the Newington Center for pilot program.

Do you Lyft?

New Way of Mobility

The older adult community in the U.S. is rapidly growing, which means more people will be facing transportation challenges. Lyft is a **safe, reliable, and affordable** transportation option, even for those without smartphones.

46M 2010
72M 2030
The older adult population in the US is projected to increase from 40 million in 2010 to 72 million in 2030.

- 76% of seniors use smartphones
- 30% of seniors use Lyft
- 20% of seniors use Lyft for medical appointments

Lyft is creating a new mobility option for older adults and caregivers that help make transportation on demand and accessible.

Seniors have become Lyft drivers to supplement their income and reconnect with their community.

Every year, around 3.6 million Americans miss or delay medical care because they lack appropriate transportation to their appointments.

Lyft Concierge offers transportation providers to request rides for their customers through the Lyft platform. No smartphones required. A requester simply inputs the passenger's name and pickup and drop-off location, and a Lyft driver will be matched to give the ride.

[Name of Senior Center]
[address & contact information]
[add logos]

[add tag line]

Tips for Implementing Lyft

Using Concierge

Jewish Family Services staff described their 1,300 rides per month system that includes:

- 2 full-time and 1 half-time staff
- Rides are available 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., 7 days a week
- Most rides are prescheduled – some open ended with call for a ride back
- Phone is supported minimally on weekends
- For a person using concierge without a phone, staff calls the Lyft driver and tells them the person is there and they may be expecting another color car and to please let the rider know they are there to pick up.
- As a safety measure, the driver should ask for the person by name so they are clear this is the appropriate driver.
- On the weekend, riders are instructed to call the on-call phone.

Brookline Ridesharing Classes

As Brookline Senior Center developed this class, they realized some older adults were reluctant to trust the technology and even the ride itself. They currently offer two types of ridesharing classes.

- The initial class is 1.5 hours in length and includes downloading the app, but no on-the-road experience. In this first session, they emphasize the development of the technology, the safety of the mode, and the ability to use this mode as a first mile/last mile solution. In addition, they review the smartphone technology needed to access this transportation option.
 - > First Mile/Last Mile Solution definition: Transit agencies are collaborating with stakeholders to establish innovative public/private pilot projects to reduce the distance between a traveler's origin/destination and a transit station/stop, commonly referred to as the first/last mile.
- The second class is 3 hours in length and involves 1.5 hours with personalized travel training. There are generally 15 people per class and a ratio of 3 students to 1 volunteer. During this session, students delve more deeply into the app, including how to call for the ride, identify the driver, safety features, and what happens if there is a problem with the ride. During this second session, we take a "practice" trip to a local café or ice cream shop. We pair participants, and one person calls for the inbound ride and the other person calls for the ride on the return trip. This creates a sense of community within the group and allows them to practice the new skills in real time with the support of the instructor, staff, volunteers, and each other.

Step-by-Step Education and Safety

It is important to explain to the older adult exactly how the ride process works, from requesting the ride to drop-off. In many cases, the older adult has never used a rideshare. It is more than the technology they need to learn. Older adults also need to know to be outside looking for their car and how to ensure they are getting into the right car (license plate, driver name, etc.).

Need Written Materials

Providing clear, written materials was extremely helpful in terms of communicating the benefits of the program. See pages 9 & 10 for prepared resources.

Cell Phone Users

For cell phone classes focused on Lyft, the participants need to be somewhat familiar with their smartphones and there should be two different classes: one for Android users and one for Apple users.

Identify Smart Phone Users

In Brookline, they concentrated on helping older adults utilize the Lyft app. This group was identified through the survey conducted over the summer as having access to the technology needed (i.e. a smartphone) to use the Lyft app. It worked very well to start with an identified group and offer a larger training on the Lyft app and what to expect from the rideshare program.

Lyft Ambassador

At the Newington, CT site, they found an ambassador of the program who shares her testimony at trainings. She uses a powerchair but can use a folding wheelchair. She has been using Lyft to get to medical appointments and more. She loves it!

Lyft and Lunch

While off-site lunches for senior center participants are typical center programming, getting there by Lyft is unique. The Newington site arranged a Lyft and Lunch where some traveled to the restaurant by Lyft concierge, some used the Lyft Ap on their own, and some traveled with staff who gave them a live training and showed them how to use the app.

Lyft & Learn

Educational sessions can get unmanagable when trying to download the app with a group. There are so many different phone setups. Newington solved this by scheduling Lyft & Learn tech session. They had staff available at regular times for individuals to come and download the app prior to attending the educational class.

Create an Advisory Committee

We are most successful when we engage people with expertise, experience, and passion at the outset of any initiative. Newington's first step was to recruit and convene an advisory committee that includes our tech help volunteers (skilled in providing one on one assistance to older adults), an unpaid marketing consultant (who is assisting us with some rebranding efforts), a representative of our local cable access station, faculty from a neighboring state college (who we have worked with in developing an intergenerational initiative). This committee helped to shape, guide, and champion this initiative.

“A very convenient way to travel, makes my life much less stressful.”

Marketing Ridesharing

Pilot sites promoted ridesharing and educational programs through typical senior center marketing tools, including:

- Monthly newsletters
- Posting announcements with weekly activities schedules in print and online
- Posting flyers on the bulletin boards at the center and in the community
- Information at health fairs
- Postcard snail mail
- Email blasts and robocalls
- Facebook posts
- Newspaper articles
- Local TV — see this story: <https://www.10news.com/money/free-lyft-rides-connecting-san-diego-seniors-to-wellness>

Gathering stories and testimonies

Stories help others connect emotionally with your senior center and to the power of ridesharing. These can be anonymous stories using a pseudonym. Put them in your newsletter. Share them with funders, your Friends group, and people in your town. Let your Finance Committee know some of these emotional stories at budget time. It may yield more funds and increased staffing.

Read Nahzeda's story from San Diego (right).

Additional Resources on ncoa.org:

- Templates and samples
- Copy of ad from newsletters
- Flyer posted in public libraries
- Flyer mailed to senior center participants
- Media release and newspaper story

NAHZEDA'S STORY

Nahzeda is an older adult who moved from Russia to live with her daughter, Regina, a couple of years ago. Regina was recently diagnosed with Breast Cancer and spends long hours getting Chemotherapy treatments.

Regina really wanted to engage her mom in something outside the home while she focused on getting healthy. Regina heard there were English language classes at our senior center, but she often didn't have the time or energy to drive her mom back and forth to the center.

Because of the NCOA/Lyft grant, Regina was able to call and schedule a ride for her mom and we would dispatch and monitor the ride to the senior center through Concierge. Nahzeda speaks very little English and Regina had peace of mind knowing we were there watching over the ride and communicating with the driver as needed to get her mom safely back and forth.



News Articles

Free Lyft Rides Connecting San Diego Seniors to Wellness:

<https://www.10news.com/money/free-lyft-rides-connecting-san-diego-seniors-to-wellness>

Older People Need Rides. Why Aren't They Using Uber and Lyft? By Paula Span, New York Times:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/16/health/uber-lyft-elderly.html>

Health Impacts of Unlimited Access to Networked Transportation in Older Adults, Leslie Saxon, MD1*, Rebecca Ebert1, and Mona Sobhani, PhD1; 1 USC Center for Body Computing, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USAUSC study:

<https://thejournalofmhealth.com/health-impacts-of-unlimited-access-to-networked-transportation-in-older-adults/>

Free rides could lead to better health outcomes for seniors; University of Southern California — Health Sciences:

<https://www.caregivingclub.com/the-usc-aarp-foundation-lyft-ridesharing-pilot-study/>

Related Research Narrative

The Challenge of Transportation in Later Life

Giving up driving is a pivotal moment in many seniors' lives, filled with anxiety and fear of dependence on others. It also can have a profound impact on older adults' well-being. Research shows that seniors who stop driving make 15% fewer trips to the doctor; 59% fewer trips to shop or eat out; and 65% fewer trips for social, family, and religious activities compared to their peers who are still driving.¹

Lack of transportation also is the number-one barrier to older adults participating in evidence-based health promotion programs. Offered by community-based organizations, including senior centers, these proven programs empower older adults to manage their chronic conditions, prevent falls, and maintain their health.

Lack of transportation also can lead to social disconnectedness, which has been found to negatively impact physical health, and perceived social isolation, which can negatively impact mental health, such as depression.² These challenges are even more pronounced for individuals with low accessibility to a personal vehicle, those with lower incomes, and women of color.³ Recent research in England found that subsidizing public bus transportation for older adults led to a 12% decline in their depression symptoms.⁴

¹ Baily, Linda. (2004) "Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options," Surface Transportation Policy Project.

² Cornwell, Erin York & Waite, Linda J. (2009) "Social Disconnectedness, Perceived Isolation, and Health among Older Adults," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 50(1): 31-48.

³ Kim, Sungyop. (2011) "Assessing Mobility in an Aging Society: Personal and Built Environment Factors Associated with Older People's Subjective Transportation Deficiency in the US," *Transportation Research*, 14(5): 422-429.

⁴ Reinhard E, Courtin E, van Lenthe FJ, *et al.* Public transport policy, social engagement and mental health in older age: a quasi-experimental evaluation of free bus passes in England. *J Epidemiol Community Health* Published Online First: 19 January 2018.