

Volunteer Transportation in Maine

Survey conducted by UMaine Center on Aging/Lifelong Maine, May - June 2026

81%

Fully Active
26 of 32

742

Volunteer Drivers

4,673

Registered Riders

32,000+

Rides Per Year

31/32

Free to Riders
No Waitlist

Note - These 32 programs are not the only source of volunteer rides. UMaine's Senior Companion Program, one of the friendly visitor programs not captured in this survey, had 17 volunteers who provided 3,383 rides to 36 community members.

How These 32 Programs Operate

31 of 32 programs are recruiting volunteers

23 of 32 are all-volunteer, including coordination

27 of 32 programs do not reimburse mileage

29 of 32 require background checks

17 median number of drivers (range 3-121)

69 average age of driver (range 25-90)

Organizational Structure

16

Age-Friendly &
All-Volunteer

8

501(c)(3)
with paid staff

5

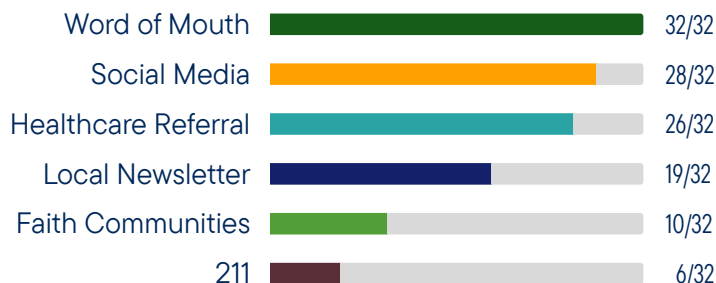
Social Service
Organization

3

Municipal

40% of rides last year were provided by programs running on under \$10,000 — or nothing at all.

How Riders Find Out About Programs

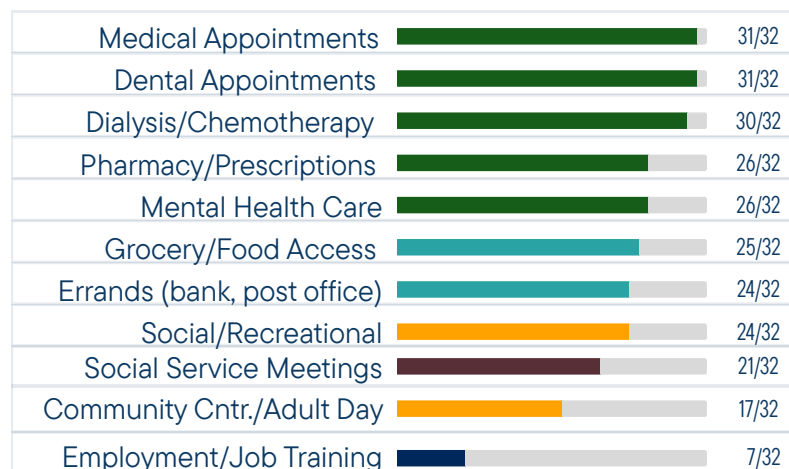


Who These Programs Serve

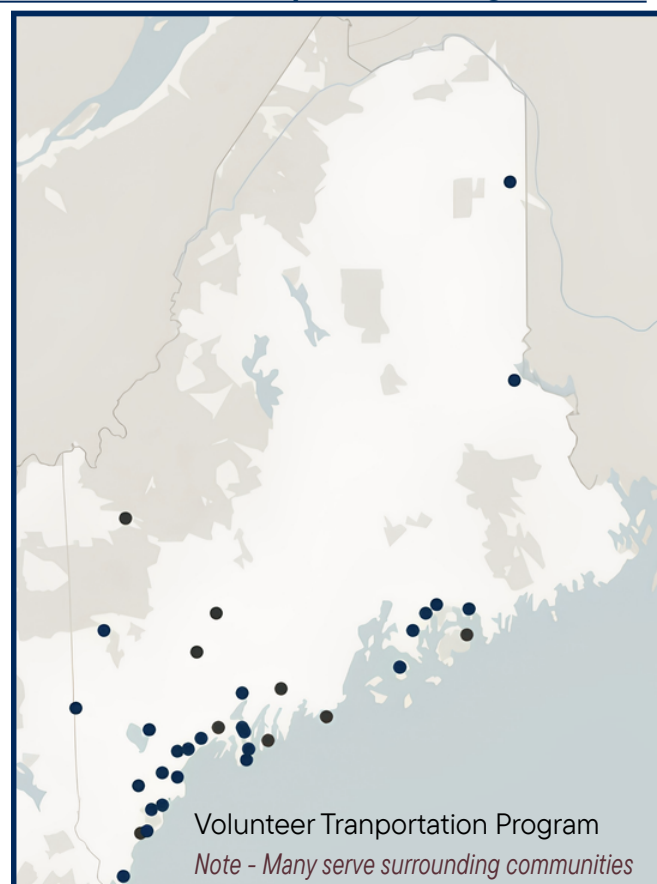
All 32 programs serve older adults, most beginning at age 60. Nearly all also serve people of all ages with disabilities. No program requires income verification.

Accessibility: 29 of 32 programs can accommodate riders who use walkers, canes, or portable oxygen. Only Island Connections, Friends in Action, and Heart to Heart have wheelchair-accessible vehicles. Most programs require riders to self-transfer.

Trip Destinations Covered



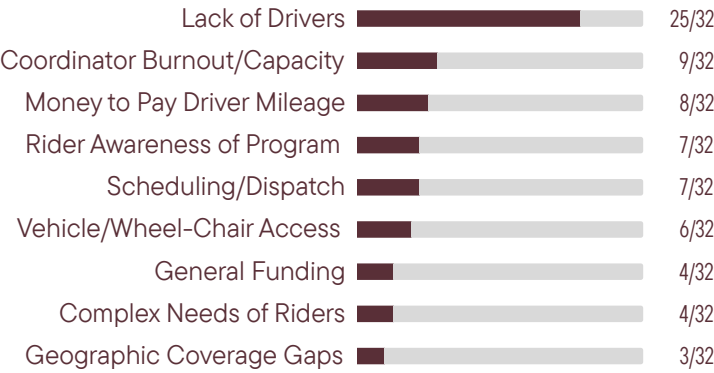
Maine's Volunteer Transportation Programs



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Barriers to Serving More Riders



Ride Booking & Program Operations

Rider Registration	Phone intake (30 programs); online form (5); in-person (8)
Advance Notice	Range: same-day to 2 weeks. Most common: 5 days (9 programs) or 1 week (6 programs). Most try to accommodate shorter notice.
Scheduling Software	Assisted Rides (13); Excel (5); Google Sheets & Calendar (4); other platforms—Volgistics, RideScheduler, ITNRides (4); none (6)
Availability	Weekdays only: 17; All days: 11; Evenings only: 2; Weekends only: 2
Seasonal Changes	18 report seasonal shifts — mostly reduced driver availability in summer (snowbirds) or winter weather. Rider demand is generally steady year-round.
Referral Partners	15 coordinate with hospitals, clinics, or social service agencies.

Coordinator succession: Many programs depend on a single volunteer coordinator. Several respondents named leadership transition as an operational risk. Few have a documented backup plan in place.

Maine’s Volunteer Transportation Programs

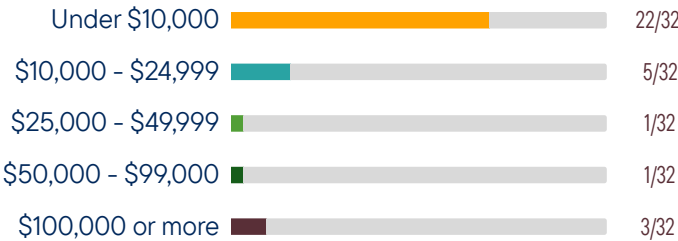
Currently Providing	Wanted, Not Yet Offered
Orientation/Onboarding 31/32	Dementia Awareness 13/32
App/Software Training 9/32	Defensive Driving 9/32
Rider Assist (in/out car) 8/32	First Aid/CPR 9/32
Mobility Assist 6/32	Mobility Assist 9/32
Defensive Driving 3/32	Rider Assist (in/out car) 7/32
Mental Health First Aid 2/32	Mental Health First Aid 4/32
Dementia Awareness 2/32	App/Software Training 3/32
First Aid/CPR 1/32	

Primary Funding Sources



Many programs draw from more than one source. Several list Lifelong Maine, AARP Maine and Maine Cabinet on Aging support.

Annual Operating Budget



Among those reporting, 9 programs told us that their budgets held steady, 6 grew modestly, and 2 grew significantly over the past 3 years.

What do Programs Need to Keep Running and Grow?

“More volunteers overall to help with the transportation program. Our van program only has one driver which not nearly enough to fill the need for trips to the grocery store, adult daycare at SMCAA, voting, food pantry, etc.”

Age-Friendly Biddeford

“For every ride request, an increasing amount of time is spent getting timely and full information about the request, finding a suitable driver, and answering follow-up rider calls. We are increasingly challenged by riders with special needs, whether mental, emotional, or physical.”

Rides in Neighbor’s Cars, Bowdoinham & Bowdoin

“Securing dependable funding for our core services remains one of our most significant sustainability challenges. Several grants we have depended on have either been discontinued or shifted away from funding general operations.”

Island Connections, Bar Harbor

“Very interested in learning about available options of scheduling and tracking software. Would like to connect with a network of other volunteer transportation programs. Would like to offer training to drivers.”

Rangeley Health and Ride