

Mid-State Regional Coordinating Council (Region 3)  
Annual Report 2019-2020

The Mid-State Regional Coordinating Council (Mid-State RCC) which includes Belknap and Merrimack Counties (excluding Hooksett and including the towns of Deering, Windsor and Hillsborough) held nine committee meetings during FY 2019 and 2020, all of which were open to the public. In October 2019, the committee shifted from meeting every other month to meeting quarterly. Meeting locations varied between Concord and the Lakes Region and switched to virtual meetings in May 2020 using the Zoom platform, in accordance with NH Executive Order 2020-04 #8 State and local government bodies are permitted and encouraged to utilize the emergency meeting provisions of RSA 91-A to conduct meetings through electronic means while preserving, to the extent feasible, the public's right to notice of such meetings and ability to observe and listen contemporaneously.

The Mid-State RCC membership is currently at twenty-two member organizations. With new members coming on board and a renewed commitment from existing members there is rejuvenated energy to tackle the goals of the coordinated plan. RCC meetings average 13 representatives in 2020 which is more than 70% higher than the previous year.

In May 2019 Mid-State RCC nominated and approved CAPBMCI to serve as Lead Agency for the Mid-State Region and it continues to support and advise four programs supported with the FTA Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & People with Disabilities funding. These four programs are the Volunteer Driver Program which serves the entire region, the Rural Transit Service Expansion Program which provides demand-response, shared-ride service to disabled under 60, the Taxi Voucher Program and the Mobility Manager's position.

Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission and Lakes Region Planning Commission developed the Coordinated Transit & Human Services Transportation Plan for 2019 on behalf of the Mid-State Regional Coordinating Council and was adopted by the RCC on January 14, 2020. This plan is an update and replaces the 2010 plan.

**Volunteer Driver Program:**

This program has a part-time coordinator, funded through the Section 5310 funds. Drivers received training on Defensive Driving, and how to utilize scheduling software to effectively match available drivers with those needing rides. With the onset of the pandemic the drivers were all given instruction on how to effectively clean their vehicles before, after and between riders and how to use provided personal protective equipment safely. Since the start of the program in late 2011, the volunteer driver program has provided 43,254 rides. Ridership for the last two years is as follows:

Volunteer Driver Program	# of Rides	# of Paratransit Rides	# of Individuals served	# of Drivers
2019	3,008	50	208	39
2020	4,151	67	239	46

Total mileage for FY 2020 is 109,081.77 for 5,156.80 volunteer hours served. **Rides in this program increased almost 38% with 75% fewer trip denials in FY 2020 over FY 2019 despite the effects of the pandemic during the months of March, April and May.**

**Mobility Manager:**

Mid-State RCC continues to support the regional Mobility Manager position. The Mobility Manager is a key part of the coordination and community outreach efforts by Mid-State RCC. With one of the main objectives being to educate riders and potential riders about how to make the best use of the region's transit services. In order to more effectively assist members of the disability community and seniors in the region and to promote

transit services the mobility manager is making direct contact with community leaders in the region such as Select Boards, City Councils, Planning Boards, and transit providers. In addition, partnerships are being forged with service organizations serving individual with disabilities, refugee, low income and senior populations, and community organizations such as local Chambers of Commerce, financial institutions, and grant organizations.

In addition to other outreach efforts, the Mobility Manager ran a series of 22 listening sessions throughout the region titled “Talking Transportation” in 2019 and early 2020. These sessions were held at senior centers and senior living sites with the objective of gathering information about the transportation needs and desires from seniors living in our region. This information was used to make slight modifications to the Rural Transportation Service making it more appealing to seniors. This endeavor also proved to be beneficial not only in discovering deterrents and misconceptions about the services but also proved to be a good opportunity to educate individuals about transportation options already available.

The Mobility Manager maintains the MS RCC website at [www.midstatercc.org](http://www.midstatercc.org), as well as its Facebook and Twitter pages. This position also maintains the webpage for Concord Area Transit which is the fixed-route and demand-response public transportation service serving the greater Concord area. Concord Area Transit’s website at [www.ConcordAreaTransit.com](http://www.ConcordAreaTransit.com) and its Facebook page. The Mobility Manager was also instrumental in having all Concord’s bus shelters disinfected and power-washed throughout the pandemic.

The Mobility Manager updated the Mid-State Region Volunteer Driver Programs brochure in 2019.

#### **Rural Transit Service Expansion Program:**

The 5310 funding also provides resources to enhance transportation options on the region’s Rural Transportation Service. This expansion program continues to provide service to adults with disabilities under the age of 60 who are residents of the Mid-State Region. This program provided 2,002 rides in FY2019 and 2,777 in FY2020, completing 12,118 rides from FY2016 through FY2020. The program utilizes the same vehicles used to transport seniors over the age of 60 in the region. **The number of rides in this program are at a 5-year high in FY 2020 with an increase of almost 39% over FY 2019.**

#### **Taxi Voucher Program:**

In July, 2016 Mid-State RCC launched a pilot Taxi Voucher program for the Merrimack County Department of Corrections (MCDOC) Successful Offender Adjustment and Reentry (SOAR) Program. The intent of the MCDOC SOAR is to provide support during this period so that individuals who are 60 years and older or with disabilities can successfully complete the program and reintegrate into society. Without transportation, individuals remain disconnected from society, which force them to stay at MCDOC. **TVP provided 422 rides in FY 2020 and 1,762 rides since its inception to individuals in the SOAR program.**

#### **Improvements to coordinating transportation services:**

Several improvements were made in the Mid-State Region to improve coordination of services. In 2019 CAPBCMI Transportation Services assumed responsibility of the Taxi Voucher Program’s application process, dispatching and invoicing. A few months later, it assumed responsibility of the entire Rural Transportation Service, both the Expansion Service serving individuals with disabilities under 60 years of age and the 60+ service. Approved applicants and all rides for both the TVP and RTS are now tracked in CAPBMCI’s RouteMatch system along with Concord Area Transit and Volunteer Driver Program rides. One dispatch center allows better coordination of these services allowing the dispatch team to determine the most efficient or appropriate service for every ride request seamlessly for individual riders.

#### **Mid-State RCC Volunteer Driver Program (VDP) Peer-To-Peer Network**

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The Mid-State RCC VDP Peer-To-Peer Network was established in 2011. It currently consists of ten independently operated volunteer driver programs in the region. This group reconnected as a team on November 25, 2019. The VDP Network intends to meet twice a year to discuss service coordination, best practices and network with other coordinators throughout the Mid-State Region. The May 2020 meeting was postponed due to the pandemic.

### **Shopping For Seniors Program**

During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic when the NH Governor issued the 2020 Stay-At-Home order, the Mobility Manager started the Shopping For Seniors program utilizing volunteer grocery shoppers from a local volunteer organization and Concord Senior Transit and Rural Transportation Service buses. This pop-up service provided grocery shopping and delivery services in 31 municipalities in our region to at risk seniors, and was successful at keeping the senior transit services open throughout the Stay-At-Home order and providing groceries to 109 seniors in the service area.

### **What's Next:**

In the coming year the Mid-State RCC will focus on updating the Mid-State Region Transportation Directory for 2020. We are looking at the possibility of expanding the Taxi Voucher Program to other qualified residents within the Mid-State Region. We will work with 211NH to improve online searches for transportation using their search engine, and will continue to maintain and promote the transportation programs that receive funds through the RCC while working to improve coordination among all of the region's transportation providers.

### **2020 Membership -22 Partners**

Age at Home	Interlakes Community Caregivers, Inc.
American Cancer Society	Lakes Region Community Services
Central NH Regional Planning Commission	Lakes Region Planning Commission
City of Concord	Partnership for Public Health
Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc.	Riverbend Community Mental Services, Inc.
Capital City Cab Company d/b/a Concord Cab	Town of Hillsborough
Department of Corrections Merrimack County	Town of Newbury
EngAging NH	Town of Tilton
Friends Program	Town of Wilmot
Future In Sight	<b>Regional Planning Commission Staff:</b>
Genesis Behavioral Health	David Jeffers (LRPC)
Gilford Senior Resource Team	Dean Williams (CNHRPC)
Granite State Independent Living	<b>Regional Mobility Manager:</b>
	Cindy Yanski (CAPBMCI)