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2022

Revised 11/15/2022

UNITED COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP

Transportation Program

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Volunteer Handbook

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# Introduction and General Information

Standard rules of conduct and procedures are necessary for the efficient and safe operation of any program or business. This handbook serves as a guide for you, the volunteers of the United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) Transportation Program. It is designed to help you understand what your responsibilities are, what is expected of you, and how to handle certain situations. It is intended to help reduce liability risks by providing consistent methods of program operation. Agency employment and governing policies are separate documents and are not addressed in this handbook.

## 1.00 Agency Overview

UCAP Mission Statement:

“*Connecting communities to remove obstacles and provide opportunities, tools and hope as a pathway out of poverty.*”

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 is the federal legislation which resulted in the creation of UCAP and nearly 1,000 other such agencies throughout the United States. These agencies work “… to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this Nation by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity,” according to the original declaration of purpose in the Act.

UCAP is a private, non-profit community action agency which was incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota in 1965 with a 501 (C) 3 IRS designation. UCAP is not a political entity. The agency is governed at the local level by a Board of Directors represented by 1/3 low-income individuals, 1/3 private individuals, and 1/3 elected public officials.

Over the years, UCAP has expanded its services and scope to keep in touch with the constantly changing needs of the low income, elderly, disabled and any person in need of help. *“Helping People. Changing Lives,”* is the agency’s vision. As an agency committed to its mission, the board and staff are well aware that greater demands for assistance and service will continue to be a challenge as programs grow and diversify, and funding becomes limited. The staff and board continue to be highly motivated and dedicated to the mission of the agency to meet these challenges to assist people and communities.

Today, as always in the community action movement, volunteers are greatly appreciated for their time, abilities and contributions in making many of these needed services possible. Without volunteer and community support, programs would not be able to continue. Together, we can make a difference.

## 2.00 UCAP Transportation Program Overview

UCAP believes it is possible to efficiently and cost-effectively meet the transportation needs of our growing and diverse communities through a variety of options. Social services, health care facilities and other services are meaningless if people cannot get to them. Our program provides transportation so that people can live the lives they want.

Community TransitCommunity Transit is the public transit arm of the transportation program operated by UCAP. It provides public transit bus service in Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood and Rock counties. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) has provided funding for transportation to serve people of all ages and incomes since 1990. Other grant awards, local county support, passenger fares, and donations from service groups also help fund transportation services and are essential to the ongoing success of the program.

Community Transit mission statement:

*“Community Transit provides safe, courteous and dependable transportation options that connect communities and support independence.”*

UCAP attempts to provide necessary NON-EMERGENCY transportation services for people of all ages and incomes who have no other means of transportation or who request our services. Rides are available for medical appointments, social services, shopping and other approved purposes or destinations, locally and throughout the region.

Our commitment to the mission of providing transportation that works for people led us to do more than public transit. In 2013, we launched the Southwest Mobility Management Initiative to create more travel options in Southwest Minnesota. New programs expanded our need for you, our volunteer.

Community ConnectionCommunity Connection was created to provide a variety of options for travel needs that can’t be met by public transit. Community Connection serves residents in our eight-county public transit area and Nobles County.

Community Connection encompasses all of the transportation services offered by UCAP that do not fit within public transit, including:

Volunteer Drivers  
Volunteer drivers have actually been a part of UCAP since before the introduction of public transit. They were the backbone of an active program focused on making sure that area seniors got the nutrition they needed through rides to local senior meal sites or home delivered meals.

Volunteer drivers now provide transportation to anyone whose travel needs take them out of the service area or beyond the reasonable stretches of public transit. They are reimbursed for their mileage at the standard IRS mileage rate rounded down to the nearest full cent. However, because they drive their own vehicles, volunteer drivers are not an option for people who need wheelchair accessible travel.

Volunteer Van ProgramOur wheelchair accessible vans offer transportation to people using a sliding fee scale. Vans fill the gap, providing rides that cannot be met by the volunteers or the bus service. The program began in Lincoln county in 2019.

Senior-Focused Bus TransportationUCAP has buses within our fleet that are specifically geared toward meeting more of the transportation needs for our senior and disabled population. These buses operate on the same fee scale as our public transit system.

Rider Companion Program  
When a person needs a little bit of extra assistance to safely use public transit, Rider Companions can help. By providing assurance during transport, assistance to the door of the destination, and assistance with minor, non-medical tasks at the destination, these volunteers keep the door to independence open longer.

Travel Training  
Sometimes, people need a little help figuring out how to use the transportation that is available to them. UCAP offers travel training to individuals and in small group settings. UCAP staff will work with people in any way they can to help them get where they need to go with confidence.

## 2.2 Non-Discrimination

UCAP is committed to respect the individuality of each person. We do not discriminate on the basis race, culture, age, religion, affectional orientation or ability. We strive to provide a positive and confidential environment where the well-being of each person is respected.

### 2.3 Assignment of Volunteers

Volunteers are assigned to trips by Community Transit dispatchers and authorized UCAP staff. Volunteer are selected on a rotation basis ***dependent*** on their interests, availability, and special passenger needs. Passengers may request specific volunteers. However, because trip scheduling is based on so many variables, no guarantees are offered. Always let dispatchers know your preferences as to when and for whom you are willing to volunteer.

### 2.4 Dispatch Office Hours and Phone Contacts

Dispatch offices are open for regular business 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except on holidays. Staff are available in some offices before 8:00 and after 4:30. **If an issue arises after hours, but it is not an emergency, messages can be left for dispatch staff to address during the next business day.**

MARSHALL OFFICE: **507-537-7628** Dispatch hours: 6:45-6:45

LUVERNE OFFICE: **507-283-5058** Dispatch hours: 8:00-4:30

JACKSON OFFICE: **507-847-2632** Dispatch hours: 8:00-4:30

PIPESTONE OFFICE: **507-825-1180** Dispatch hours: 7:00-5:00

Remember to carry these contact phone numbers and your passengers’ phone numbers with you at all times when volunteering for UCAP. Please do not call staff at home after office hours **unless it is an emergency, and do not give out staff home phone numbers to passengers.** We would prefer to hear from you if necessary.

**Likewise, be very cautious in giving out your phone number to passengers.** Insist they call the office during office hours to set up rides or confirm information. Too many trips have been cancelled or duplicated when volunteers call in requests for their passengers or when drivers transport passengers before reporting it to dispatch. For liability reasons, all trips and volunteer assignments must be arranged by UCAP staff.

## 2.5 Emergency Phone Numbers for Volunteer Use

If an **emergency** arises after office hours, and it **cannot wait until the next business day**, the transportation administrative staff should be called by dialing the 24 hour cell phone numbers.

**MARSHALL AREA 507-829-5854 SLAYTON AREA 507-591-2018**

**JACKSON AREA 507-840-0905**

# Benefits, Requirements & Expectations

## 3.00 Benefits of Volunteering

People begin volunteering for various reasons. Many volunteers get involved simply because they enjoy being with people. Once you are involved, you will understand the rewards and satisfaction of providing a service that allows others to do more of the things they want to do. Volunteering has also been shown to improve the quality of life of the volunteer and being part of an organized volunteer network creates more social connection. We hope you will enjoy this experience. You are never obligated to volunteer more than you would like to.

The following are some **additional benefits** for **VOLUNTEER DRIVERS** who use their own vehicles:

* **You are reimbursed** the current IRS rate from the time you leave your home until you return.

In some cases, mileage reimbursement is considered taxable income. If you ever have questions or concerns on this, please consult your tax accountant or seek professional advice regarding volunteer driving.

* **Additional Accident Insurance** is provided for volunteer drivers when they are providing rides authorized by staff.

Many times we are helping our neighbors, friends or family members that need rides and it is difficult to say no or cover your out of pocket costs. By being a registered volunteer driver, you will have the added protection of secondary accident coverage. This is added protection for you, the driver, at no extra cost.

* The Program covers **up to $20 to attend defensive driving classes** and offers other safety classes for your benefit.
* **Out-of-pocket costs, such as meals and parking, are reimbursed.**

These costs must be associated with an authorized passenger trip and documented with dated, itemized receipts.

## 4.00 Volunteer Qualifications and Requirements

To be considered an active **volunteer registered with UCAP**, the following requirements must be met:

* Have an honest desire to help people get where they want to go as independently as possible.
* Complete a Registration Form.
* Sign and adhere to our Codes of Conduct form explained in more detail under “Volunteer and Passenger Expectations” in this manual.
* The Informed Consent Form for Criminal Background Check is a required part of the registration form. Volunteers must agree and adhere to the requirements listed on the form and must have a criminal record clear of convictions of crimes against persons for at least (15) fifteen years.

\*If at any time this information changes from the first time you register with our program, we must be notified.

Any active volunteer who drives the **agency van or their own vehicle** must meet these requirements:

* have and maintain a valid Minnesota divers’ license.
* have a Medical Statement Form signed **annually** by a qualified medical provider. Drivers must not have limitations or be taking medications that affect their ability to drive safely.
* sign an informed consent for UCAP to run a motor vehicle violations check **annually**.

We cannot register anyone who has, within the past (3) three years been convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance, and had his or her license canceled, revoked or suspended, or has been convicted of driving a motor vehicle without insurance or a valid license.

Any active volunteer who **drives his own vehicle** must also meet these requirements:

* Carry automobile liability insurance that meets or exceeds Minnesota minimum insurance requirements. Proof of insurance is required **annually.**
* Maintain a legally registered vehicle. Copies of vehicle registration is required **annually.**
* Drive well-maintained vehicles that are in safe operating condition. A Vehicle Inspection Statement Form must be signed by a mechanic **annually.**

*\*We do not want you to incur extra costs to obtain signatures for the mechanical or medical statements. These should be obtained when you make your routine visits annually.*

It is highly encouraged, that volunteer drivers complete a defensive driving class every three years. The cost of the 55 Alive or National Safety Council Defensive Driving Class will be reimbursed with a receipt, up to a maximum of $20. All drivers should try to attend one 8-hour class. These classes are offered periodically throughout the region. A 4-hour refresher course is available to those who have completed the 8-hour course. Drivers often receive a discount on their car insurance for taking these classes.

Volunteers are asked to attend scheduled volunteer meetings and help the program to be a safe, quality and cost-effective service to the people we serve. We also want our volunteers to enjoy their experience with us. All suggestions are welcome.

## 5.00 Safety Standards

Any driver who is found to meet or exceed the following criteria shall be subject to performance counseling which could lead to dismissal of volunteer duties. These guidelines shall be presented to the volunteer driver at the time of registration and shall be clearly understood.

1. Minor Violations – more than 6 within 3 years or more than 3 within one year. Minor violations include but are not limited to: speed, stop sign violations, traffic control violations, improper turns, failure to yield and seatbelt violations.
2. At Fault Accidents – more than 2 in 3 years OR more than 1 in 1 year.
3. Major Violations – 1 within 3 years. Major violations are defined as Driving under the Influence (drugs or alcohol), Reckless or Careless Driving, Leaving the Scene of an Accident, Fleeing/Eluding an Officer, Vehicular Homicide, Driving under Suspension.

## 6.00 Volunteer and Passenger Expectations

**Be kind and courteous to your passengers.** As a volunteer, you are there to help make sure our passengers can successfully get to and from their destinations.

Inform passengers upfront about the rules in your vehicle. You are not expected to drive passengers that abuse safety and car rules. Drivers may insist that clients abide by the rules of the vehicle which may include things like no eating, drinking or smoking in the vehicle. Riders’ guides will be available in all agency vehicles for easy reference.

**Report incidents and misconduct involving passengers** on the back of your log sheet so staff can keep accurate record of passenger need and evaluate their fitness for the program.

Extra stops can be provided for passengers who need to smoke, eat or stretch, as time allows. Speak with your passenger about this prior to leaving.

Volunteers must perform the stops assigned to them by dispatch staff, and call dispatch if the passenger requests any additional stops **prior to making the stop**.

Remember, as a volunteer for UCAP, you are responsible for all passengers until they reach their destination. For their safety and your protection, **never leave children or vulnerable adults unattended.**

Because people may have medical conditions unknown to you, please **avoid offering candy, special treats or food** to passengers.

In order to provide a safe ride, dispatchers do their best to tell passengers what to expect and how our program works. **Refer them to transportation staff if they have questions about the program.**

Please **avoid going inside a passenger’s home** to assist him/her unless this has been prearranged as a rider companion. This could put you and the passenger at risk of many things. Use good judgment.

**Drivers must call passengers the day before** (if passenger has a phone) to confirm pick-up times, to review directions or to go over other information regarding the trip. It is also advised that you call your passenger when you are leaving to pick them up, especially if there is considerable mileage between you and them.

If there is a no-show, especially if the passenger is a minor, report this immediately to a dispatcher. Record your trip as a no-show and turn in your trip report as you normally do. All miles incurred will be reimbursed.

Try not to be too early or too late.

**Do not keep other passengers waiting** because one person is late or not ready.

**Please do not change pickup times unless transportation staff has been notified.**

When a return ride is needed, **never leave passengers without communicating to them or someone**, such as a nurse or family member, what time you will be returning to take them home.It is also suggested that you leave the dispatch number in the event that the appointment finishes early.

If an emergency or another commitment comes up, and you cannot fulfill trip obligations, every effort to contact a transit staff person is required. Passengers and agencies are depending on us to be responsible so we must be prompt and follow through on trip assignments.

**Note:** All trips must be assigned by transportation staff in order to be reimbursed mileage.

## 7.00 Passenger Assistance

When you arrive at the client’s home or pick-up point, it is advisable to meet him/her at the door. Helping people to and from the car by offering an arm to guide them is a service that helps prevent accidents and promotes safety. However, that is the extent of the physical assistance you should give unless trained and directed by UCAP staff to provide specific additional service as a rider companion.

Volunteers who drive the agency van will also be trained on properly securing wheelchairs into the vehicle. Volunteers will be notified before the trip of any specific additional assistance their passengers require.

When you arrive at a passenger’s destination **do not drop him or her off at the curb**,especially during hot or cold weather conditions.Make certain all passengers are at the proper location and their appointments are confirmed. In particular, stay with young children or persons with special needs until you are sure they have been safely received. This may include walking into the building with them.

Please remember, we do not claim to be a medical transportation service. If you are transporting a passenger home from outpatient surgery or other medical procedures, **do not provide any assistance that you have not been trained to provide (such as giving medications)**. Notify medical staff if you have concerns about the passenger’s ability to travel safely and call the office immediately if you do not feel comfortable doing the trip.

Volunteers should **never sign a release form for a client!** Politely state that you are only responsible for ensuring that the rider successfully gets where he or she needs to go, you cannot perform any medical duties during transportation, and that you will be leaving the passenger once you get to his/her destination.

Community Transit services are offered either as curb-to-curb or door-to-door. This means that anyone who requires assistance beyond the door of a facility may only be able to successfully use our service with an escort or rider companion.

## 7.1 ESCORT & RIDER COMPANION SERVICES

Escort: A passenger may schedule transportation and request an escort of their choosing to ride along at no charge and provide the additional assistance that they require.

Rider companion: Passengers may request that UCAP arrange a Rider Companion when they are unable to arrange an escort on their own.

The types of service **provided by a rider companion** may include:

* providing companionship to ease anxiety during transport;
* offering an arm for support beyond the door of the destination;
* helping passengers understand when to get in or out of the vehicle;
* walking with the passenger into a facility;
* pushing people in wheelchairs to appointments;
* waiting in waiting areas during appointments;
* helping with shopping or small errands.

**Volunteers do not:**

* assist with transfers or lift passengers into or out of vehicles;
* assist with medications, oxygen tanks, etc. during transport;
* assist with bathroom breaks;
* carry large items;
* go into homes to provide assistance other than helping them out to the vehicle;
* Offer any type of assistance they have not been trained to provide.

If a passenger is frail or needs more assistance than a volunteer can provide to be successfully transported, he or she must be referred to other transit options. Report this to UCAP staff.

## 8.00 Providing Transportation with Animals

Due to passengers being sensitive to animal fur and the danger of animals becoming aggressive, drivers should not allow pets to ride along unless a pet carrier is provided **and** it is approved by dispatch.

Service animals may be transported without a pet carrier. Dispatch staff will do everything they can to find a driver who is willing to transport passengers with service animals. We suggest that the passenger and his/her service animal sit in the back seat.

The owner must maintain control of the animal at all times. Volunteers must not disturb service animals while they are working.

## 9.00 Reservation, Scheduling, Cancellation Procedures

We ask all passengers to call 24 hours or more in advance to schedule rides. However, because a 24 hour notice is not always possible, we do try to fill trips even if they come in the same day. Volunteers may get called on short notice to do a trip because we are trying to help someone who really needs a ride. The discretion to accept or decline a trip always rests with the volunteer.

Let the dispatchers know right away if you have decided not to go. If it is not during regular dispatch hours, let your rider and/or driver know, as well. Do everything possible to follow through once you accept an assignment. The person you are traveling with is depending on you. Dispatchers will find a replacement when possible. Be aware that passengers who need rider companions will not be transported without one.

## 10.00 Complaints, Conduct and Confidentiality

If you have any complaints or issues regarding a passenger, staff members, or an experience that needs attention, please contact UCAP staff to discuss your concerns.

If a passenger should contact us with a complaint about a volunteer, the staff who takes the initial complaint will document it. The volunteer will then be contacted to get his/her perspective. A follow-up call will be made to the passenger and, if appropriate, the documented complaint will be kept in the volunteer’s file for future reference and to determine if a pattern is developing.

If a passenger complains to you about another volunteer, please do not take sides or put anyone down because you may not know all the facts. Tell the passenger to report concerns to UCAP staff, then document what the passenger told you.

***Drive safe and please feel free to offer suggestions or report any concerns you may have.***

Please refer to the Volunteer Code of Conduct, included below, which must be adhered to at all times. Keep in mind you will be providing a service for clients of other agencies, as well as the general public. Be a good listener, **do not ask personal questions, and refrain from giving advice.**

We cannot stress this enough: Keep communication between you and your passenger confidential. If your friends or other people ask about whom you are travelling with or where you are going, do not repeat names or give out information that is private. Sharing confidential information is a serious offense, which could lead to a lawsuit. Be polite and professional in answering questions. If you have reason to believe the passenger is in danger of being abused or neglected, call UCAP staff or the county social service agency to report concerns.

10.1 Volunteer Code of Conduct

The following “Welcome and Code of Conduct,” which you signed during the registration process, must be adhered to by all volunteers. This is for your safety and the creditability of our program.

Welcome

On behalf of United Community Action Partnership we would like to welcome you as a volunteer for the Transportation Program. With your assistance, we can provide a service that otherwise could not be provided. We thank you for dedicating your time and talents.

*I will conduct myself with dignity, courtesy, and consideration. I will conduct myself in a professional manner and at the same time be friendly, understanding and courteous. (I will smile and be nice!!!)*

*I realize, since I am a volunteer, I do not receive payment for my time. Furthermore, I will not insinuate or accept tips or request that my meals are paid by passengers.*

*Having been accepted as a volunteer, I will provide service according to the standards of paid staff and treat my volunteer work as seriously as if I were paid for it.*

*As a volunteer, I will not make derogatory or discriminatory remarks to or about passengers because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, marital status, or status with regard to public assistance.*

*I will not impose my religious beliefs or lecture passengers.*

*I will realize that sexual harassment or contact with passengers is inappropriate and not allowed.*

*I will not use alcoholic beverages or mood altering drugs while serving as a volunteer.*

*I will be punctual in the performance of my duties.*

*I understand I must respect the privacy rights of the passengers I serve. The Minnesota Government Data Privacy Act states that personal, medical, psychiatric and financial information is private, not public data. Information on these subjects may be shared with the dispatcher or other staff only if it is necessary in relations to the passenger’s transportation needs or well-being.*

*I recognize that as a volunteer driver, I represent United Community Action Partnership I have an obligation to uphold these codes of conduct.*

**Volunteers who violate this Code of Conduct may be dismissed at any time.**

# Emergency and Safety Procedures

**NEVER PUT YOURSELF OR PASSENGERS AT RISK BY ALLOWING SAFETY RULES AND LAWS TO BE BROKEN.** All car seat, seat belt and other safety laws, as well as your vehicle safety rules, must be adhered to at all times. Dispatch staff will inform passengers that if they do not adhere to your guidelines or the safety laws, we may not be able to transport them.

## 11.00 Difficult Passengers

Call staff immediately if a passenger is argumentative or difficult and you are unable to calm him or her. Call the Sheriffs’ Office if you are having major problems with a passenger, are afraid for your safety or if staff cannot be reached.

Do not argue with passengers. This will likely make any problem worse – stay calm. If infant/child seats are not being used or other laws are being challenged, transportation cannot continue unless passengers comply. Keep transportation staff informed if a situation arises and transportation is delayed or cancelled.

## 12.00 Illness and Illness Prevention

Illness is not 100% avoidable. As a volunteer, it is important that you are prepared for the possibility that you or your passenger may become too ill to complete a trip. It is also important that you take basic measures to ensure you are providing an environment that is minimizing the spread of illness during transportation. Some tips on how to do this are included in the appendix to this manual.

## 12.1 Passenger Illness

We are not medical emergency transportation. If a passenger is too frail or ill to be safely transported without specialized assistance, please report this to staff immediately. If a passenger becomes ill during transport, go to the nearest hospital or clinic for help.

## 12.2 Volunteer Illness

If you, the volunteer, become seriously ill while transporting UCAP passengers, please make every effort to contact a transportation staff person. **Remember UCAP is responsible for all passengers until they reach their destination.** Because we transport many passengers who should never be left on their own, such as vulnerable adults and children, a law enforcement officer should be contacted to assist you with medical attention and phoning office staff or family members for your passengers. Passengers must not continue transportation until authorized by a dispatcher.

## 12.3 Illness Prevention

UCAP requires that all volunteers take basic measures to ensure that the vehicle used for transporting riders is clean and safe. This includes keeping vehicles clear of excess clutter or strong smoke smells so passengers can sit comfortably. It also includes disinfecting vehicles and other safety measures, like social distancing and masking as appropriate. More detailed information on illness prevention is provided in Appendix I.

## 13.00 Accidents & Incidents

If you are involved in an accident or incident while volunteering, please notify UCAP staff ***within 24 hours. Regardless of how minor you think it is.*** Document what happened on the accident/incident report form and verbally report what happened. Do not admit liability for an accident until you consult an attorney. Try not to say anything about why you think the accident occurred. Identify witnesses and carefully preserve any physical evidence. Do not talk to the media. Direct the media to contact UCAP.

\*If you are driving an agency vehicle, the appropriate accident forms will be kept in the vehicle at all times.

## 14.00 Weather Conditions

**Please listen for a radio announcement whenever there are travel advisories.** When you hear announcements that UCAP is not providing bus service in your area, please call your passengers so they, too, are aware that no travel is advised.If the passenger insists on going and you do not feel it is safe, have them call dispatch staff to reschedule.

In case of threatening weather conditions, you have the right to cancel the ride, even at the last minute. It is up to you to determine if you think the driving conditions are unsafe. If you decide not to provide the ride, call transportation staff and report your decision. If the passenger insists on going, have them call dispatch staff to reschedule.

If you are in route with a passenger and the weather becomes hazardous, seek shelter immediately. If possible, notify transportation staff of your situation so people who may be expecting you or your passenger(s) can be contacted. If necessary, call the local police department to request assistance. Passengers may not like having to wait out a storm, but safety is the primary concern. Remember to carry survival kits in your vehicle. PLEASE DO NOT TAKE UNNECESSARY RISKS BY DRIVING PEOPLE WHEN WARNINGS EXIST OR UNSAFE CONDITIONS ARE PREDICTED. SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

## 15.00 Vehicle Breakdown

If your vehicle shuts down or becomes unsafe to drive, pull off the road as quickly as possible. Keep all passengers safe in your vehicle unless the vehicle cannot be positioned safely out of the flow of traffic or catches on fire. When evacuating passengers make sure all passengers stay together and are at a safe distance from roadway. Use your cell phone to call for assistance or ask another motorist to get help. Do not leave passengers!

If another vehicle stops and asks you if they can assist, have them call for a Law Enforcement Officer or Highway Patrol. Do not send passengers in unknown vehicles. Contact the dispatch office as soon as possible so they can also assist with making other arrangements and making further contacts to family members or clinics for your passengers.

## 16.00 Seatbelts and Child Safety Seats

***It is our policy that all passengers use seat belts according to State law.***If you are asked to transport a young child, please review the current child restraint information provided with this manual or ask a dispatcher for information about current laws. If the family does not have a car seat, you will not be able to drive the child until the proper child seat is obtained. Call the dispatch office and inform them of the situation.

Seat belts and child restraints are required by law. Transportation should never be provided without them. If child safety seats are required, the child’s provider or guardian must secure them in your vehicle. For liability reasons, make sure that you are present while the seat is secured **but do not secure it yourself. Always make sure child safety seats are removed from your vehicle when the child exits.**

# Rates and Reimbursements

## 17.00 Collecting Fair

Riders using our program are given the amount due for their trips when they call in to request transportation. When assigning the trip, a dispatcher will inform our volunteer of the amount they should **collect when** **passenger enters their vehicle**. Fare should be placed in an agency fare envelope, sealed, and turned in along with driver paperwork. You do not need to verify how much is in the envelope.

If coupons are presented to cover fares, please mark the coupon by initializing the amount needed to cover the trip cost and note ‘coupon’ on your trip sheet.

## 17.1 Billed Trips

Billed rates (private pay) are set at a higher rate than general passenger rates to cover administration costs to track and generate an invoice. UCAP must get prior authorization to bill for trip. If you have been told that a passenger needs to pay a fare, and the passenger tells you it was supposed to be billed, **do not proceed with transportation** until you speak with a dispatcher.

## 18.00 Driver Reimbursement Procedures

UCAP issues expense checks every two weeks.

Volunteers who drive their own vehicle should turn in records and expenses weekly. **Do not forget to turn them in.** Your mileage must be recorded by our dispatch staff before it goes to fiscal for payment. **It can take 5-7 business days for mileage to be processed and paperwork received by the fiscal department.** Please plan accordingly.

Volunteers who drive agency vehicles will be given a stipend according to the trip mileage from the point of passenger pick-up to final passenger drop-off (or return to garage for one-way trips). Any trips completed and confirmed by Monday on the week of payment will be processed that week. Any trips completed after that, will be processed for payment two weeks later.

Trips on agency vehicles are confirmed when the program manager receives passenger assessment sheets. These can be sent by email to [communityconnection@unitedcapmn.org](mailto:communityconnection@unitedcapmn.org). Hard copies must stay in the clipboard in the vehicle. UCAP staff will collect and restock paperwork at least once a month.

Paperwork that is received by our fiscal department by noon on Tuesday the week of payment is included on the check that week. Any invoices or paperwork received by our fiscal department after that will be processed two weeks later.

## 18.1 Mileage Reimbursement & Stipends

#### Mileage Reimbursement

The mileage reimbursement rate for volunteers using their own vehicles is set by the UCAP Board of Directors at the **current IRS rate**.

#### Volunteer Stipend

Volunteers driving agency vehicles will receive a stipend for each trip based on trip mileage from the point of passenger pick-up to the point of final drop-off (or return to the garage for one-way trips) using the following scale:

1-29 miles—$25

30-60 miles—$50

61 miles or more—$75

For coordinated trips (including 2 or more scheduled passengers, not escorts or PCAs), add $10 per passenger.

## 18.2 Receiving Tax-Free Reimbursement

Volunteers can receive reimbursements or stipends tax free through the ACE program. To be a volunteer for ACE, you simply have to live in a county with an active ACE program. This means that **if you are an ACE volunteer, you are already eligible**. Just let us know that you’re an ACE volunteer so we can make sure you are on our list.

If you are not an ACE volunteer, we encourage you to sign up!

## Additional reimbursements

#### Meals

One meal cost can be reimbursed when volunteers are 30 or more miles from home for more than four hours. Meals are reimbursed at the standard Federal lunch rate for Minnesota. Reimbursement can be made for each four-hour period thereafter. For example: if a driver is gone for a total of 8 hours and is 30 miles away from home the whole time, they can be reimbursed for two meals. We do not cover passenger meals, unless a social service agency has authorized meals for their clients or it is an emergency situation.

#### Other Costs

All trip-related parking costs can be reimbursed.

***Itemized receipts*** for meals, parking or other authorized, out-of-pocket costs **MUST BE ATTACHED TO YOUR PAPERWORK IN ORDER TO BE REIMBURSED – NO EXCEPTIONS.** MNDOT funds do not cover additional costs such as meals, so please be conservative. Receipts need to be itemized and include a date and time that concurs with your trip.

Personal mileage and unnecessary expenses cannot be reimbursed by UCAP.

An active phone line is necessary to be an active volunteer with UCAP. However, we cannot assume the cost for a volunteer to maintain an active phone line. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the land or cell phone line of their choice for as long they desire to volunteer for UCAP.

## 18.4 Reimbursement for Incomplete Trips

Below are the guidelines for payment when passengers are no-shows or cancel-at doors. Volunteers must make effort to contact passengers prior to transportation as outlined in section 6.00 of this manual to receive reimbursement for no-passenger trips.

#### Personal Vehicle Use

UCAP will pay the allowed reimbursement for the mileage driven. Mark on your trip sheet that the passenger was a no-show and notify dispatch right away.

#### Agency Vehicle Use

Stipends can only be given for passenger trips completed.

Thank you for your diligence and commitment. We appreciate you very much!!

# Appendices

## Appendix I - Illness Prevention

The CDC has some general guidelines to remember to prevent infectious diseases.

1. **Wash your hands often** – Use soap and make sure you wash for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer if soap is not available. Avoid touching your face and eyes with unwashed hands.
2. **Avoid close contact** – As a volunteer driver, the best way to do this is to have people sit in the back seat, not directly behind you.
3. **Cover coughs and sneezes** – As always, cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or the inside of your elbow, discard the tissue in the trash right away, and refer to tip #1.
4. **Clean and disinfect** – Frequently touched surfaces (like, most everything in a vehicle) should be disinfected daily.

* Hard surfaces can be wiped down with a 70% alcohol solution, a bleach solution or any other EPA registered household disinfectant (e.g. Lysol wipes), used as directed.
* A 70% alcohol solution can be sprayed on cloth seats to disinfect them. A non-abrasive soap (such as Ivory) and water is recommended for leather seats.

1. **Monitor your health** – Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, and take your temperature. If you have any symptoms, aren’t feeling well or have been in contact with someone who is sick, don’t hesitate to call UCAP staff and cancel upcoming trips.

**You may also wear a cloth face covering** – Masks may help prevent people who have the illness (even if they do not have symptoms) from spreading it. Dispatchers will request that passengers wear a mask whenever masks are being encouraged by health authorities or public officials.

* Cloth face coverings should **not** be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or who cannot remove the mask on his/her own. If you do not feel comfortable transporting someone without a mask, please let the dispatch office know.

Here are a few tips for using a cloth mask:

* Place your mask over your mouth and nose.
* Tie it behind your head or use ear loops and make sure it’s snug.
* Don’t touch your mask while wearing it.
* If you accidentally touch your mask, wash or sanitize your hands.
* Remove the mask by untying it or lifting off the ear loops without touching the front of the mask or your face.
* Wash your hands immediately after removing your mask.
* Regularly wash your mask with soap and water in the washing machine. It’s fine to launder it with other clothes.

## APPENDIX II – Protecting from blood-borne pathogens

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR RIDERS

You and your riders want to be healthy. Pathogens and viruses can cause disease. Hepatitis B and AIDS are only two of the many communicable diseases. Anyone can be infected. Protect everyone. Anything draining should be covered. Drainage should be contained. Transmission primarily occurs with direct exposure to infectious blood or body fluids. Anticipate exposure. Think about your client. Ask health providers is a dressing may be needed. Have a strong plastic bag, ice cream bucket, gloves and Chux readily available. Report any exposure to your supervisor immediately. Direct any further questions about follow-up exposure examinations/tests to the state office of the Minnesota Department of Health at 1-612-623-5414.

**IN SUMMARY**

1. Avoid direct contact (your skin to a riser’s body fluids).
2. Prevent chapping/cracking of your skin (especially hands).
3. Anticipate exposure.
4. Have supplies readily available to cover and /or contain body fluids.
5. Clean skin that has been in direct contact with body fluids with soap and water immediately or as soon as possible.
6. Report exposure.