

AT&T Ameritech /SBC Retirees - We are AASBCR®

Blue Bulletin

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AASBCR® Grant Helps Seniors with Medical Appointments

Ride Assist Naperville, a small non-profit outside Chicago since 2016, connects seniors with volunteer drivers who take them to and from medical appointments. Faced with a surge of ride requests as Covid wound down, RAN needed funds to attract potential drivers and pay for background checks, software, insurance, and car signs.

RAN's Executive Director, Ashley Abraham, contacted AASBCR® last Spring with a detailed grant proposal including project objectives and budget. The grant was approved in July.

Now we are happy to learn that RAN met its objectives! They added 18 drivers for a total of 56. Riders rose by 20%, and rides rose by 73% to 1500.

A veteran driver said, "I'm glad to see so many fresh faces driving for RAN. I can drive only once a week so to see more people helping makes me feel good for our riders."

The program started with marketing materials used for direct mail, online ads, and community resource fairs. The next step was to vet the volunteers and expand the ride assignment platform. The grant also funded car signs, which was the big innovation for 2022.

Riders reported feeling concerned that they weren't sure which car was the RAN driver's car when being picked up. The solution was to provide drivers with magnetic signs they would post on their car doors whenever making a RAN ride. The signs advertised RAN at the same time they helped riders!



"I love those magnets you got! I can spot my driver from the entrance of my apartment building and know who it is right away. That is handy and I'm so glad you have them!" -RAN Rider

"Today I was outside a medical building on Rickert, picking up a RAN rider with the signs on my car doors, when a lady asked if she could take a picture of the sign to let a friend know about the service. So they worked!" -RAN Driver

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Riders are extremely grateful for RAN's help with access to their medical appointments. Lack of transportation is dangerous for a senior's mental and well as physical health. RAN keeps seniors connected to the community and eases their worries about daily details.

Plus, riders love the personal interest they sense from their volunteer drivers. No other service waits with the rider through the appointment to take them home, and no other ride service charges such a tiny fee.



"Finding new drivers is time-consuming and expensive," Abraham reports, "but once they're onboarded, the cost to keep them is minimal. So AASBCR's® grant will have good effects for years to come." As the demand from riders continues to grow, RAN continues to seek new volunteer drivers, but now they know which type of marketing is most cost-effective.

AASBCR® is pleased to see that our grant was used effectively to help seniors in a local community. RAN has been a perfect fit for our Grant Guidelines.

Did you know that, as an AASBCR® member, you can recommend an organization for a grant? When you find an organization we can help, go to AASBCR.org to review those Guidelines, and then open the grant application form (also on the website), save it, and forward it to the group in an email encouraging them to apply!

Proudly working on behalf of retirees of the Bell System and successor companies of the New AT&T, located worldwide

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