



2018 Rideshare Demonstration Project Final Report

Studies show that the lack of affordable, reliable and effective transit options rank as a top barrier for the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless to achieve housing and self-sufficiency. Without reliable transportation, the homeless cannot access the kinds of employment, services, and social connections necessary to improve their lives and enhance self-reliance. Auto ownership is cost prohibitive for many and the lack of transportation options, especially in Greater Minnesota, causes and perpetuates homelessness in rural and small-town communities.

The recent growth of a new model of expanding Rideshare opportunities provided primarily by Lyft and Uber has presented an option that has the potential to address many of the limitations of public transit by expanding service areas and hours of available service. Therefore, Open Your Heart developed an innovative 12-month demonstration project to determine if a rideshare model can improve homeless/at risk populations in accessing kinds of care and support to improve their lives.

In 2018, Open Your Heart implemented the Rideshare Demonstration Project. Project participants included six non-profit agencies providing emergency and self-sufficiency services to people who are homeless or at high risk. As of December 31, 2018, with \$40,000 in funding and technical support from Open Your Heart, 4,204 rides were provided in the Mankato (1,351), Moorhead (487), Rochester (623) and St. Cloud (1,743) communities to individuals who were currently homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Rides were used primarily to provide access to crisis services, court, education, employment, housing, medical appointments, and any other services designed to enhance self-sufficiency.

As a result of the Rideshare Demonstration Project, participating agencies repeatedly reported that having rides provided to their clients through rideshare enabled their staff to use their time more efficiently. Additionally, it helped their clients secure housing, work towards maintaining employment and much more. Without the Rideshare Demonstration Project, their low-income clients would have had to pay for their own transportation or not have received necessary services at all. Furthermore, participating agencies would have had their staff drive their clients, which based on results added up to thousands of miles traveled.

Negative results reported from participating agencies include the following:

- No drivers available at the scheduled time (clients finding themselves stranded, sometimes at night)
- Agency staff having difficulty navigating rideshare system
- Limited driver availability
- Technical difficulties, including difficulty in receiving help from Uber/Lyft



Due to the negative results and concerns shared by participating agencies, Open Your Heart has connected with local rideshare representatives to discuss possible solutions to these issues. Nonetheless, we are confident that providing rideshare options in communities where agencies do not have the capacity to transport all they serve or find public transit options inadequate, helps remove significant barriers for those who are currently homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless due to lack of transportation options.

Quantitative Data	
Number of rides provided	4,204
Total cost of rides	\$35,615.53 (Avg. \$8.50 per ride)
Distance in Miles	9,766.47
# of Lyft rides	3,156
# of Uber rides	1,030
Female	3,684
Male	496
Families	1,439
Homeless	3,908
Not homeless	156
Unaccompanied youth	426
Youth	278
Seniors	25
Disability	1,214
Primary purpose of ride	
Employment	1,112
Housing	175
Medical (including mental health)	1,240
Access to crisis services	512
Education	243
Other	675



Grantee Survey Responses

Anna Marie's (St. Cloud) – 927 rides provided to 1,324 clients

1. What did this grant mean to the people that you serve?

With this grant our clients were able to get to scheduled appointments (job interviews, house/apartment showings, medical appointments, urgent care visits, work, meetings with social worker's/case workers, meetings with county workers for benefit help and many other types of appointments) that they might not have otherwise been able to attend. Many of our clients have serious safety concerns walking or taking public transit due to their abuser's location and knowledge of the client's schedule. Very few of them have access to their own form of transportation or the funds to pay for their own Uber, Lyft, or taxi. Our clients felt safe having the door to door transportation option that Uber and Lyft gave them.

2. What were your alternatives without this grant?

Without this grant we typically have to drastically cut back on the number and type of appointments we are able to assist our clients with attending. This is often a difficult thing to manage because each of our clients has different needs associated with their circumstances and it is almost impossible to create general criteria for transportation approval that will benefit all of our clients equally.

We mainly rely on public transit, taxi cab services, and our advocates. With the specific bus routes and time schedules of public transit it can be very difficult to figure out when to leave and how to make it to appointments. This is especially true if the route does not take you right to where you need to go or if the buses are not running on that day or during that time. In this region we are also limited to taxi services as well. Most of the time there can be up to a 50-minute wait during peak operation hours and our clients are often late or miss their appointments anyway. We have also found that Uber and Lyft are a cheaper option than the taxi services we have available to us. Limited staffing options also does not allow for a viable internal transportation option. We generally only have two staff scheduled for each 8 hour shift in the shelter. This can make it very difficult for one staff member to leave and transport a resident for an unknown amount of time.

3. How did OYH meet your specific needs, and what were the results?

With the Uber and Lyft service we were able to provide speedy and specific transportation for our clients. Most of the time the wait for the driver was not more than 10 minutes, possibly 15 minutes during peak operation times. We were also able to give the specifics of the driver's information to our client. This helped eliminate confusion and alleviate anxiety that using public transit or taxis can create. We were also able to set up multi stop trips for



our clients with ease which is not something that we were able to do in the past with our available transportation options. Our advocates also never had to leave the building and they were able to continue to work with clients while other clients were going to appointments.

4. How many people did this grant impact?

1324 clients (including children) were able to receive rides to their appointments.

CADA House (Mankato) – 864 rides provided

1. What did this grant mean to the people that you serve?

With the grant, our agency was able to facilitate greater integration in the community. Women were able to get to work, job interviews, housing appointments, medical appointments, therapy, stores, etc. Transportation barriers are one of the most common issues of women in our shelter. Therefore, the grant helped us to significantly reduce the impact of this barrier.

2. What were your alternatives without this grant?

The alternative to the transportation grant would be for women to take public transportation. Which in our community is very limited both geographically and in terms of the bus schedule. The other alternative would be for staff to provide transportation during scheduled times. This can be an inconvenience to the person needing transportation because they have to wait for an advocate to be available.

3. How did OYH meet your specific needs, and what were the results?

OYH met our needs by providing transportation to both women in shelter and those who are already in their homes. Transportation is often the number one barrier for low income and undocumented families. Using Lyft also eliminated some barriers in situations of an emergency. The result was that women were able to access resources, get to work and other appointments, and access safety in dangerous situations.

4. How many people did this grant impact?

We were able to offer a total of 864 rides to our clients. 562 rides were provided to shelter residents and 302 rides were provided to outreach clients living in the community.



Catholic Charities (St. Cloud) - Services for Homeless Youth – 382 rides provided to 21 clients

The target population for Services for Homeless Youth is young people ages 16-24 who are experiencing homelessness. Program participants are unaccompanied youth (under 25). Youth have different housing and self-sufficiency barriers than adults and need specialized programming.

1. What did this grant mean to the people that you serve?

Youth used rides to access county benefits, to seek and apply for employment, to access education, and for expected or unexpected reasons, such as medical or mental health care. Youth also used rides to access employment. One youth would have lost her job without the rides provided by Rideshare funding. A ride was also provided for a youth to get to the emergency room, which helped this person avoid the high cost of an ambulance ride. Rides are cost effective, convenient, and help staff remain onsite to provide services rather than being pulled away to provide rides.

2. What were your alternatives without this grant?

Historically staff have provided rides when they could. Changes in insurance policy have created a challenge for this process. The other alternative is to provide bus passes, however, the bus takes many times longer than the LYFT rides. This is difficult for youth going to work or in the case of emergencies. Youth may also find themselves walking in the cold weather if there are no other options.

3. How did OYH meet your specific needs, and what were the results?

This funding allowed Catholic Charities Services for Homeless Youth to provide transportation that would not otherwise have been available. The use of LYFT increased time efficiency and allowed staff to remain onsite to provide the necessary services of getting youth the support services they need to become housed and self-sufficient.

4. How many people did this grant impact?

This funding impacted 21 people through 382 rides.

5. Impact statement/s:

Abby: “There were several times I would not have had a way back to the Youth House because the buses had stopped running for the day. Thank you for giving me a safe ride home.”



Tony: “Thanks for providing a ride to church. I would not have been able to get to the service on time if I had to ride the bus.”

Our resident, Dawn, was feeling quite ill and staff determined she needed to go to the Emergency Room. She was scared to call an ambulance because of the cost. Staff called her a Lyft and she was able to get there safely and fast, which was great because she ended up having to have emergency surgery.

Catholic Charities (St. Cloud) - Domus Transitional Housing – 434 rides provided to 24 clients

The target population for Domus Transitional Housing is women in transition and their children under the age of 12. These women are low-income, homeless, and often leaving extreme situations such as, chemical dependency recovery and/or domestic abuse.

1. What did this grant mean to the people that you serve?

It meant a lot (which is an understatement) ---transportation is a HUGE issue for those experiencing homelessness. The women who utilized this grant at Domus have major barriers and are in transitional housing with 2 main goals of maintaining long term stability/self – sufficiency, and permanent housing. Transportation is one of those major barriers that can obstruct our clients from employment, daycares, and community resources. What this grant meant to the people we serve? It gave our clients more opportunities to be successful! Clients were able to:

- Get to appointments, that would often be cancelled due to lack of transportation or the time it takes to get to appointments (transferring busses/lack of bus services).
- Because of the greater convenience...take two kids or a baby shopping, and being able to get them and groceries home in a timely and safe manner. One trip vs. small amounts because of lack of arm space, strollers, groceries etc.
- Drop kids off at daycare and get to work on time; pick kids up more easily.
- Work weekends, and/or late shifts when busses are not in service.
- Address emergencies...Urgent Care, doctor’s appointments, therapy etc. Not having to take a whole day off of work because of transportation issues.
- Attend recovery groups in the evening and on the weekends.
- Avoid extreme weather: wind chill and temperatures below ZERO (dangerous for children).
- HAVE LESS STRESS!!!!

2. What were your alternatives without this grant?

Alternatives would be that our clients would be significantly more limited in employment opportunities (would need to find daycares and employment within walking distance and



employment hours that would fit the bus schedule). Clients would have to pay for cabs/or friends to take them where they needed to go. Alternatives are very limited and clients would simple not be able to access some resources.

3. How did OYH meet your specific needs, and what were the results?

The OYH grant allowed Domus clients much more opportunity to access the community and community resources.

4. How many people did this grant impact?

This funding impacted 24 clients through 434 rides.

5. Impact statement/s:

A few of Domus' clients were able to purchase their own vehicles after utilizing the OYH grant because they were able to save money and maintain employment.

Churches United (Moorhead) – 487 rides provided

1. What did this grant mean to the people that you serve?

Transportation is an ongoing issue in our area. Being able to use the grant money meant that individuals and families did not have to worry about waiting outside in the cold or how they were going to pay for their bus fare. The grant made it easier for families to transport their children and they did not have to be on the bus for long periods at a time.

2. What were your alternatives without this grant?

Our alternatives to the grant would be the staff driving the clients or bus passes. We are limited to bus passes each month and the bus system in our area needs to be updated.

3. How did OYH meet your specific needs, and what were the results?

Staff was using much of their time to transport guests to appointments or bringing children to school if they missed the bus. The grant helped guests get to where they needed to be in a quicker, easier way. Our agency has limited funding for bus passes monthly and when our passes run out then it is up to the guests to figure out how they were going to get where they need to be.

4. How many people did this grant impact?

We have 18 single beds and 8 family rooms, consisting of 3-8 people per family. A majority of the guests at Churches United utilized the grant money for rides. The month of December



we provided 119 rides, which is the most out of the year. This shows that the grant money very beneficial in the colder months.

Women's Shelter (Rochester) – 623 rides provided to 774 clients

1. What did this grant mean to the people that you serve?

Access. With Lyft our clients had much greater access to the needed serves that are available. Able to get to medical appointments. Search for housing, get access to meetings through a safe channel.

2. What were your alternatives without this grant?

Main alternates would have been staff time used for transportation. At times when it is not deemed safe for staff to transport a taxi would be used, but with much greater expense, and not as timely of service.

3. How did OYH meet your specific needs, and what were the results?

Able to get people to appointments and other needs in which staff was not needed in a timely matter. Cut down on use of unneeded staff time driving. Results were better service to clients. Through I do not have concrete evidence pointing to this the fact that clients received more timely services, and able to make connections when needed leads me to believe adequate transportation leads to a decrease in homeless length of time.

4. How many total rides were provided and how many people did this grant impact?

623 Total rides provided throughout the year. Because we used generic names to maintain confidentiality it is difficult to say the number of people served. I can provide in aggregate transportation as a service was provided is 774

5. Impact statement/s:

Creating Access to safety is a story that comes back up throughout the year. When people call identifying immediate need for safety, or are working with an advocate for ongoing safety the ability to implement that is key. With the added convenience of Lyft, staff was able to more accurately create a plan with a person if they were wanting to leave a violent situation.



Partners for Affordable Housing (Mankato) – 487 rides provided to 38 clients

1. What did this grant mean to the people that you serve?

This grant opportunity had a greater impact that we received it would. As we had been providing limited rides or bus tokens, we now had the opportunity to meet a greater majority of their needs. This meant that they could:

- go to seek other services or take care of things in a quicker, more efficient manner
- not need to depend on buses or spend less time on a bus,
- work a 2nd or 3rd shift job rather than turn it down,
- feel empowered and independent,
- more time flexibility to meet their needs or schedules
- reduced financial burden
- take advantage of the quantity of food offered at the local food shelf if they weren't as concerned about how they would carry it to/from a bus stop or have to walk,
- for those with disability, pick up at the door rather than walking or pushing wheelchair several blocks to bus stop
- give people the means to follow up on what we're pushing them to do to be self-sufficient

2. What were your alternatives without this grant?

Staff could possibly take them Monday through Friday if request a ride 24 hours in advance and staff were available. This creates a liability for the organization and staff, as well as takes away their availability to others. Otherwise, we ask for donations for bus tokens and monthly bus passes. Many people were walking to and from jobs, stores and other places in the evenings and weekends. People sometimes ask others for rides, but often are “charged” excessively for the opportunity.

3. How did OYH meet your specific needs, and what were the results?

This was an amazing opportunity to:

- free up staff time,
- gave staff more time to help more people, rather than just the person receiving a ride,
- reduce liability for organization
- reduce liability for the staff member as the driver
- guests/clients responsible for having car seats for their children rather than depending on staff
- guests/clients more self-sufficient and depending less on staff



- less dependence on staff to taken and pick up when convenient for guest/client vs. meeting business needs
 - less dependence on staff to move their things for/with them which puts a physical strain on staff
 - reduce vehicle expense such as gas, tires and maintenance for our van
 - mental space for our staff to work on other things for the clients while they are gone, instead of being alone in a car with them
4. How many total rides were provided and how many people did this grant impact?

487 rides for 38 people

5. Impact statement/s:

Anthony, a husband and father was working two jobs in order to save up money for them to move out of shelter. He could get a ride or take a bus during the day to his first job, and walk a short distance to his 2nd job. This 2nd job however was 2nd shift and when it was over at 2am every day, he was walking 4 miles' home. It was very difficult for him to ask people for rides, and he didn't take advantage of the ride share for a while due to pride, but he was focused on helping his family, and soon after had saved up enough money to buy a low cost car, and an apartment for their family.

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