

# Hunterdon County Volunteer Driving Program



# Hunterdon County

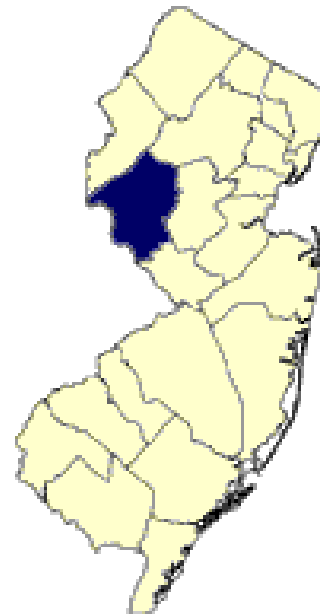
**Land size:** approximately 430 square miles  
Northwest NJ

**Population:** 122,000

**Seniors:** 39,000 (32%)

Rural- Suburban sprawl- Small towns

No public transit, no taxi service



## Hunterdon County LINK Transportation Hunterdon County Department of Human Services

1985- Consolidated system- all special needs transportation funding pooled to fund bus system.

Demand and modified fixed route service- in county travel.

Approximately 700 trips per day.

[www.ridethelink.com](http://www.ridethelink.com)



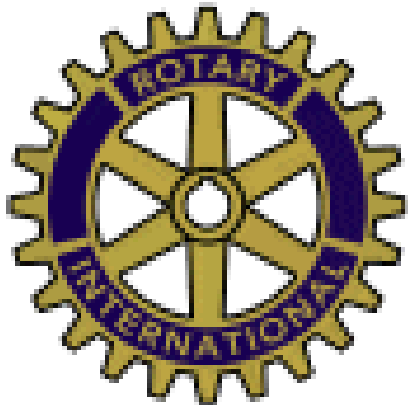
# Volunteer Driver Program History

1989-90 Need Identified

Pattern of “denials” through the LINK Dispatch office.

LINK Transportation System unable to transport.

Primarily Senior medical appointments.



Hunterdon County Office on Aging contacted Men's Rotary; challenge presented. Rotary provided 8 volunteers.

## Developing the Program

The **Volunteer Driver Program** was designed to serve two purposes:

1. provide interested citizens the opportunity to meaningfully serve their community.
2. provide an opportunity to supplement the services of the Hunterdon County LINK Transportation System.

Primary service need- Seniors, Disabled

Medical Appointments- in county/out of county

Monday- Friday 8 a.m.- evening

2 County vehicles available- limit 2 clients per day.

Average 13-15 volunteers

## Program Guidelines

1. Trips are only provided to riders unable to use the regular LINK Service for their appointment.
2. Trips provided for medical transport only.
3. Volunteer trips are strictly “single purpose” trips- no stops, prescription pick up allowed.
4. Clients must be ambulatory, no wheelchairs.
5. Limit of 2 trips per month per client.
6. An insured County car is provided for transport.
7. Volunteers must have a valid drivers license.
8. Volunteers must have a physical exam by the county doctor.
9. Scheduled trips may not exceed 75 miles one way.
10. Suggested donations -\$2 in county, \$4 out of county  
Client responsible for parking, toll costs.

## **Volunteer Recruitment**

- Service clubs, community organizations, churches, Office on Aging.
- Individuals. Those not affiliated with an organization may volunteer by providing two (2) character references.
- Personalized approach in recruiting, retaining volunteers.

## **Volunteer Processing**

- Volunteer expresses interest and availability.
- Copy of valid driver's license must be provided. License is logged in and renewal date is noted.
- HC Dept. of Human Services requests DMV license check. Driver is determined to have an acceptable/unacceptable driving record.

## **Physical Examination**

- Once driving credentials are confirmed, volunteer is referred to County Personnel Office for referral to County physician. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- Results are returned to County staff and medical acceptability is confirmed.

**-Volunteer is added to “call list”.**

# Volunteer Orientation

- Review of “9 Point Policy”.
- Need for patience and understanding toward clients, some of whom may not be necessarily friendly or companionable on a given day/trip.
- Review of donation envelope procedures.
- Physical Orientation to County vehicle; use of logs, emergency contact information, vehicle mechanics.





## **Program Delivery**

All requests are screened to determine level of medical appointment (follow up visit, surgery, treatment)

Outpatient surgery transport is evaluated on a case by case basis.

Notification of ride varies, but averages one week in advance.

Number of trips/clients vary by month; average 8-15 clients per month.

Window sign provided for drop offs/handicapped parking.

## **Day of Transport**

Driver picks up County vehicle, client information.

Completes Trip Manifest Log.

Picks up client, notes any special issues.

Provides donation envelope.

Returns vehicle, donation envelope, and manifest to HCDHS.

## **Recent Program Growth**

2000- 169 hours, 17 unduplicated clients

2003- 409 hours, 44 unduplicated clients

through August 2004- 314 hours, 38 unduplicated clients.

# Reasons for Program Success

- Board of Chosen Freeholders supportive of Senior services
- Hunterdon County spirit of volunteerism
- “Seniors Helping Seniors” theme
- Well organized LINK Dispatch office
- Clear program requirement
- Clear program expectations
- Personalized approach to recruiting volunteers
- Volunteer Recognition
  - Annual Volunteer Recognition Breakfast
  - All drivers are acknowledged publicly