



The University of Vermont

## **Migrant Health Programs Volunteer Commonly Asked Questions**

### **What are the requirements to be a Health Access Transportation Volunteer?**

20 years of age, commitment to health access for all, valid driver's license, reliable access to a registered inspected vehicle, flexibility to transport on occasion during regular business hours.

### **Do I need to be able to speak Spanish?**

No. While the ability to speak Spanish will allow you to converse with a larger number of individuals that you will be transporting or visiting, many volunteers have no or low Spanish skills. Some workers are from Jamaica and speak English as their first language. The majority of those we serve are workers and their family members from Latin America who speak Spanish or an indigenous language as their first language. Many have some English skills, which also lends to the ability to communicate.

### **What are the rides for?**

We coordinate access to health and health related services for migrant workers in the state. As such, the vast majority of the requests will be to transport one individual to and from his or her health appointments. Occasionally, you might be asked to transport a family. Sometimes, we look for help picking up an over-the counter medication or prescription.

For those who are interested in helping with non-health related transport, we sometimes celebrate food produced through Huertas, a kitchen garden project, by gathering in a central location to cook and eat together. On occasion there are other organized activities to bring workers and families together, usually connected at least tangentially to health. Two Saturdays a year, the Mexican consulate comes to Vermont and many Mexican farmworkers need transportation. It is up to you whether prefer to only be contacted for health related needs or not.

### **Are the workers I might transport here legally or are they undocumented?**

Our program supports access to services for migrant workers and their family members regardless of documentation status. We are not allowed nor do we want to inquire about immigration status. We recognize that some migrant workers in Vermont are likely undocumented. We are committed to helping workers and their family members who live in Vermont regardless of immigration status receive the health care services they need. We ask that volunteers refrain from discussing immigration status with individuals who they transport.

### **Where are the appointments and how long are the trips?**

The majority of the appointments are at the local Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) which provide health and dental care. However, depending on the health need, the individual may go to a specialty appointment, walk in clinic, laboratory or diagnostic imaging (generally in the local hospital).

The length of time required depends on where you live in relation to the farmworker and the health entity. Most appointments last about 45 minutes. When the time commitment is long, we can look for

one person to bring the patient to the appointment and one to bring him/her home. Don't hesitate to just offer one way!

Sometimes, a patient will need a prescription filled. Generally, they are not set up at any particular pharmacy so the closest and most convenient can be chosen. If the patient is not set up in a particular pharmacy, you will need the individual's full name, date of birth and address. If communication with the patient is difficult, the clinic should be able to give you that information with the patient's consent. The individual may feel uncomfortable going into the pharmacy with you and may choose to stay in the car.

### **How will I know where I am going?**

We will always provide to you the address of both the individual you will be transporting as well as the location of the health entity. Whenever possible, we will provide additional information about the location such as a description of the living arrangement and where to park your car so as to not be in the way of farm equipment!

### **How far in advance are the rides set up?**

As much as possible, we set up transportation to appointments a week or two in advance. However, many appointments are made last minute due to an illness or injury that has just occurred. We send out an email with the dates and appointment times as well as the general locations so drivers can see which trips might be more manageable. If transportation is needed more immediately, we will call or text potential volunteers.

### **How often am I expected to provide a ride?**

You are able to select how frequently you are available though we prioritize volunteers who are able to volunteer at least every month. We have no minimum requirement to be on our volunteer list. We are constantly looking for new drivers to avoid driver burn out. (We welcome all referrals to friendly available health access transporters).

### **Are there volunteer opportunities that do not require transporting individuals?**

On occasion we need Food and Essential Needs Volunteers. These volunteers will assist with coordination and delivery of food and other essential needs identified by clients and staff. Food and Essential Needs Volunteers will not drive migrant workers or family members as part of official volunteer role. Requirements: 16 years of age, commitment to health equity, valid driver's license, reliable access to a registered inspected vehicle. (minors need permission from parent/guardian)

**Bridges to Health Volunteer Provider:** Bridges to Health Volunteer Providers are licensed medical professionals that volunteer their services within the scope of their medical license. In most cases, this is in the form of farm health outreach visits or health fairs in which we offer free health and wellness screenings and consults to workers and their family members.

**Bridges to Health Volunteer Interpreters** are bilingual volunteers who have been screened for language competency and completed, at minimum, a full day training on interpreter best practices, ethics, and standards.

### **What else should I know about?**

We talk to all recipients of health access transportation and recommend that they offer each volunteer \$10 per ride. Some individuals are unemployed or have limited resources and thus unable to offer gas money. We have a limited amount of gas cards available for reimbursement. When a volunteer has driven 70 miles in a single or combined trip, they can let us know and we can send a \$25 gas card (providing we still have funding to do so). There is a form that the volunteer must fill out to acknowledge the receipt of the gas card.

We have volunteer cards available to be used as identification as a UVM volunteer for any encounters with law enforcement. Please let us know if you would like one.

Be sure to review the driver guidelines before you go out. Your car should be set to go – up-to-date inspection, air in tires, gas in the tank etc. Give yourself and extra 10 minutes or so in case you get lost. If you have a cell phone, bring it along to call for assistance if needed.

Do not hesitate to email or call if you are unsure about the directions or other pieces of information necessary to transport an individual. Likewise, if you have offered to transport but end up having a conflict, please let us know as soon as possible to find another driver or reschedule the appointment.

**Claire Bove**

Community Health Worker Program Coordinator

[Cbove@uvm.edu](mailto:Cbove@uvm.edu)

802-249-2611

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Vermont Extension, Burlington, Vermont. University of Vermont Extension, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating, offer education and employment to everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. Any reference to commercial products, trade names, or brand names is for information only, and no endorsement or approval is intended.