

## Tuolumne County Transit Agency Tuolumne Trip Program

The underlying philosophy of Tuolumne Trip is that residents of Tuolumne County can be self-reliant when provided with a structure of transportation support that empowers leveraging of community goodwill and encourages the establishment and expansion of personal social networks. This empowerment philosophy of Tuolumne Trip can help build and connect our community.

In every community, there is a population faced with complications that make travel for basic quality of life needs extraordinarily challenging. This could be due to lack of service availability or mobility limitations caused by physical, mental or financial challenges. Tuolumne Trip is intended to provide a transportation alternative for those isolated and homebound individuals who cannot use current services (listed below) or are current ADA Certified Dial A Ride users wishing to substitute more convenient travel options by providing them with the tools to connect with available and new community resources.

- Tuolumne County Transit: Dial-A-Ride offers curbside pick-up and drop off services to persons with disabilities with ADA Certification and persons who are 60 years of age or older. **209/532-0404**
- Catholic Charities: Non-Emergency Medical Transportation available to adults 60 years of age and older who because of mobility or other issues are unable to use private or public transportation. **209/533-2622**
- Veterans: Medical transportation to and from Sonora to select Veteran's medical facilities. Sonora Veterans Clinic. **209/588-2600**
- Southside Community Connections, Wheels: Serves the needs of Seniors in the Groveland and Big Oak Flat area. **209/962-7303**

Tuolumne Trip collaborates with the aforementioned partners in the community to provide needed transportation to the residents of Tuolumne County. This collaboration minimizes duplication of efforts and strives for the most effective use of program dollars. The connections built through Tuolumne Trip and community collaboration should aid in building a stronger transportation network. These partners represent social service agencies, stakeholders, and community representatives.

## Objectives

- To empower eligible seniors, persons with disabilities, persons with limited means or veterans to recruit their own drivers to facilitate needed transportation when they do not have any other form of transportation available or are unable to use other forms of transportation. Examples of eligible drivers include: Uber, Lyft, Taxi Service(s), Social Service Provider, Family Members, friends and/or neighbors.

The overall consideration for determining eligibility for the Tuolumne Trip Program is: “Can the individual access needed transportation if Tuolumne Trip doesn’t help?” For eligible seniors, persons with disabilities, persons with limited means and veterans, Tuolumne Trip will provide mileage reimbursement on a monthly basis for approved in-County travel as well as “pre-approved” out of county medical appointments. Tuolumne Trip participants are responsible for recruiting their own drivers and arranging their travel schedules.

## Eligibility

### 1. Program constraints:

- Only residents of Tuolumne County who are seniors (60+), persons with disabilities, persons of limited means or veterans are eligible for program participation, subject to other eligibility criteria and restrictions.
- The types of trips eligible for reimbursement are limited to those that are pre-approved through the eligibility documentation and approval process.
  - Health Care
  - Banking
  - Personal Errands
  - Shopping
  - Visit Friends and Family
  - Religious Activities
  - Volunteering
  - Drug and alcohol rehabilitation
  - Dining
  - School
  - Recreation
  - Meetings
  - Events
  - Other
- To be eligible for reimbursement, each trip must begin and end in Tuolumne County with the exception of some pre-approved out of county medical trips. Trips must be made during normal hours of service for Tuolumne County Transit unless approved in advance.

- Participants are encouraged to consolidate trips, when possible.
- Advance payments of travel reimbursements is permissible with pre-approval.
- Mileage reimbursements will not be paid to Tuolumne Trip participants for travel on Tuolumne County Transit Fixed Route, Dial-A-Ride buses or other public transportation services.
- Travel using a commercial taxi service or other Transportation Network services are eligible for reimbursement at the mileage rate established herein.
- Ride sharing is encouraged whenever possible.

2. Standard mileage allowances:

- Participants residing within 10 miles of the City of Sonora:
  - 30 miles per one-way trip
  - 300 miles per month
- All other participants:
  - 38 miles per one-way trip
  - 375 miles per month
- Out of County Travel:
  - Mileage determination for out of county travel will be determined on a case by case basis, but shall not exceed 300 miles per round trip.

Subject to the discretion of the TCTA Executive Director, the standard mileage allowances may be modified for individual participants. Mileage determinations take into account the individual transportation needs of the participant, where they live, where they need to travel, their physical and mobility status, and the availability of other alternatives. In addition, income and the capacity to pay for public transportation or other alternatives may be considered.

3. Tuolumne Trip mileage reimbursement is set at Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rates. Reimbursement payments for approved travel will be issued to the Tuolumne Trip participant on a monthly basis. It is the responsibility of each Tuolumne Trip participant to submit requests for reimbursement in a timely manner. Approved Social Service Agency Care Representatives, Social Service Coordinator or Mobility Coordinators may submit ride reimbursements on behalf of participants.
4. It is the responsibility of each Tuolumne Trip participant to identify and secure drivers for their needed travel. Tuolumne Trip participants are encouraged to arrange their travel in groups; such “carpooling”. This will not affect the reimbursement eligibility of the travel for the participants. A Social Service Agency may arrange drivers to service the participants’ transportation needs.

## APPEAL PROCEDURE

Any applicant or participant of Tuolumne Trip aggrieved by a decision or action of the TCTA Staff may appeal to the TCTA Executive Director, within fifteen (15) calendar days of the decision or action. If the TCTA Executive Director is unable to resolve the matter, the appellant may submit, within ten (10) calendar days of the TCTA Executive Director's decision, a written copy of their appeal, setting forth the reasons for the appeal, to the TCTA Board who shall have final authority in resolution of the matter.

## CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), as applicable to information received as part of the activities and operations of the Tuolumne Trip Program, provides that the "protected health information" of an individual, when disclosed, must be maintained as confidential information, and may not be further disclosed by the recipient of the information.

Each TCTA Staff Member who may have access to client information that is personal, financial, medical, or other, will be advised of their responsibilities under the requirements of HIPAA. Each TCTA Staff Member who may have access to client information will be required to acknowledge that they received this information and agree not to discuss, transmit or narrate such confidential information in any form, except in the routine procedures of case discussion within and between other TCTA Staff Members or others who might be consulted with the expressed written permission of the Tuolumne Trip applicant or participant. Copies of signed Statements of Confidentiality will be maintained in a separate file, so marked.

## TUOLUMNE TRIP IMPLEMENTATION

The TCTA Executive Director, with concurrence of TCTA Legal Counsel, is authorized to develop procedures, including forms and applications, to implement the Tuolumne Trip Program.

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