

Support for Raised Bill 1093

AN ACT PROVIDING FUNDS FOR MUNICIPAL MATCHING GRANTS FOR DEMAND-RESPONSIVE TRANSPORTATION FOR ELDERLY PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

March 11, 2009

Submitted by: Dianne Stone
Director, Newington Senior and Disabled Center
Town of Newington

I write in support of Raised Bill 1093, which will provide continued funding of this vital program which is apparently not included in the proposed budget for the Department of Transportation

In 1999, the legislature enacted this grant program through C.G.S 13b-38bb in response to a review of elderly transportation services by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee. In 2006, seven years later, funding was finally appropriated. The Municipal Grant Program made \$5 million available to municipalities, apportioned by a formula. The funds required us to apply through a Regional Planning Organization or transit district. We are required to work with the RPO to make sure that the funds were used effectively. We are also required to certify our maintenance of effort annually so that the funds cannot be used to supplant those our municipalities were already providing. The funding we receive cannot be more than 50% of our total Dial-A-Ride expenditures.

The program was deemed important 10 years ago. There should be no doubt that it is even more important now.

Among my colleagues in municipal services for older adults, I can emphatically, albeit anecdotally, assert that this program is vital.

We took the recommendation to coordinate efforts to heart. We connected with our neighbors in Rocky Hill and Wethersfield and created the Tri-Town Out of Town Medical Transportation program. Working with the contract that the Town of Wethersfield has with Logisticare, a transportation broker, for their traditional Dial-A-Ride program, we were able to purchase a block of rides. Each community gets a share of that block proportionate to their grant allocation (according to the formula, Newington can apply for \$35,584). As the lead agency, Wethersfield applies for and administers the grant and the contract with each community administering the day to day operation. I have attached Newington's program brochure.

For the first year and a half of the program we were able to accommodate all reservations. With the rising demand in all three communities we have now had to limit the service. Newington can currently provide 152 one way rides per month. This translates into approximately 3 return trips per day. We consistently use that and we regularly turn people away. When we implemented these limits, we heard from our residents. They expressed their desperate need for this program.

Not everyone has a family member who lives close enough or who has the job flexibility to take mom or dad to the doctor. The fees charged by private transportation providers are not always within reach of older adults. Residents who use a wheelchair are not able to ask their neighbor for a ride because they require a wheelchair lift. This program, while limited, is filling a significant gap in services. Newington has a wonderful Dial-A-Ride program that is well supported by the Town of Newington. But, we can not offer this scope of service without the Tri-Town program and the Tri-Town program cannot exist without this funding.

I have attached a letter from one of our passengers, Helen Swiatek. Helen describes herself as an octogenarian. I can tell you that she is a strong, independent woman who continues to serve her community as a leader. She doesn't drive and relies on us to get her where she needs to go. That is probably the only thing that she cannot provide for herself. In this, Helen is not unique.

On behalf of the older and disabled residents of Newington, I urge you to ensure that funding for this program is included in the 2010-2011 Budget.



**Newington
Senior and Disabled
Center**



**Dianne Stone
Director**

120 Cedar Street
Newington, CT 06111
dstone@newingtonct.gov

(860) 665-8768
(860) 667-5836 (TDD)
(860) 667-5835 (Fax)

March 9, 2009

Members of The Legislature:

Ambassador and Dial-A-Ride
are desperately needed and
considered -- one might say --
the "Life line" transporting
Seniors to their much needed
medical appointments.

I, personally, being a widow
in the octogenarian age bracket;
no vehicle, depend on this
service 100%.

Greater attention and allocation
of monies for this much
needed service, will be
most appreciated.

Respectfully,

Heleen M. Swiatek

RESERVATION REMINDERS

- Call at least two days before your appointment
- Have your Doctor's address and phone number handy
- Let us know if you will be using a wheelchair or bringing an aide

Call (860) 665-8778

120 Cedar Street
Newington, CT 06111

TTY (860) 667-5836

FAX (860) 667-5835

email

srcenter@ci.newington.ct.us

The mission of the Newington Senior and Disabled Center is to support older and adults and people with disabilities in the Town of Newington in maintaining and enriching their independence, well-being and quality of life. We accomplish this by:

- Promoting their full inclusion in the community;
- Facilitating access to a comprehensive choice of services and activities;
- Ensuring that services and activities respond to the diverse needs and interests of the population we serve;
- Providing ongoing opportunities for life long learning and growth.



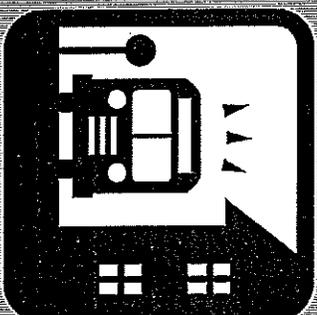
**Newington Senior and
Disabled Center**

First in the State of Connecticut

to earn full accreditation



**Out of Town
Medical
Transportation**



Rider's Guide

665-8778



General Information

The Out of Town Medical Transportation program is a door to door service offered to seniors and people with disabilities in Newington to provide transportation **for medical appointments only** in neighboring communities. We offer this service in collaborative contract with the Towns of Wethersfield and Rocky Hill through a grant from the State of Connecticut. The vehicle that picks you up will likely be from Ambassador Limousine.

Service Area

Transportation is available for medical appointments in the following communities only:

Farmington	Hartford
West Hartford	Glastonbury
Bloomfield	New Britain
East Hartford	Rocky Hill
	Wethersfield

Medical transportation for Newington will continue to be offered by our own Dial-A-Ride service.

Who Can Use This Service?

Newington residents who are 55 and older or who have a disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.* Residents who are eligible for Medical Transportation Services through Medicaid are not eligible for this service. Passengers must register for the Out of Town Medical Transportation program with the Newington Senior and Disabled Center. You must register to use this service even if you are already registered with Dial-A-Ride.

Transportation will only be provided for medical services that are not otherwise available in Newington.

Note: Wheelchair accessible vehicles will be provided when required. You can have one person accompany you if you require assistance. Let us know when you reserve your ride.

Days and Hours of Operation

Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:30. You should make your medical appointment between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Please note: during the school year, the service provider is also picking up school children. To receive the best service, you may want to make your appointment between 10 and 2.

Fares

Passengers are asked to show their Dial-A-Ride pass to the driver each time they enter the vehicle. Dial-A-Ride passes are available at the Senior and Disabled Center and provide 24 one way trips for \$8.40.

Reservation Procedures

Once registered, you can book a ride by calling the Newington Senior and Disabled Center at 665-8778. Trips must be scheduled two days prior to travel. You will need to provide your name, address, telephone number, your Doctor's name (or the name of the facility), address and telephone number and the time of your appointment. Your scheduled pick up time should be approximately 45 minutes before your appointment to ensure you get there on time.

Rides will be limited to 4 per person per month.

Return Transportation

When you are picked up for your medical appointment, the driver will provide you with a card containing a phone number. When your appointment is complete and you are ready to return home, you will need to call the number on the card. The driver will return to pick you up at their earliest convenience. Bear in mind, the wait could be as long as one hour.

Cancellations

If you need to cancel a scheduled trip, call the Newington Senior & Disabled Center main office at 665-8778. If you have not canceled your trip and do not answer your door, we may contact the Newington Police Department to check your welfare.

Call (860) 665-8778