

~ Transportation ~

Independence WITHOUT Driving!

This article is part of an on-going series highlighting innovative and promising practices to promote healthy aging. To learn more about how to make your community more aging-friendly, please see our publication, "A Healthy Community Perspective on Aging Well."

When Betty Diaz reluctantly gave up driving, at the insistence of her family, she thought her life was essentially over. No longer could she get to choir practice at her church, have dinner or see a play with her friends, or even buy the fresh veggies she loves at the Farmer's Market.

Fortunately for Betty and Elk Grove residents like her, the city's e-tran system makes it not only possible, but easy to get to the doctor's office and grocery store, as well as the golf course, mall and other places that make life fun and interesting. Designed with the goal of building a transit system that everybody could use, the city listened to older adults' requests for more service and an easier and more personalized public transit experience. In response, e-van and ez-tran were created under the e-tran system.



ez-tran

Elk Grove's ez-tran buses may "deviate" up to three-quarters of a mile from the regular, fixed route to pick up or drop off passengers age 62 and older. The ez-tran routes provide front door access to popular locations such as Wal-Mart, senior centers, older adult housing complexes, medical facilities,

supermarkets and the aquatics center, among others. The ez-tran fare is an affordable \$1.50 or even further discounted \$0.75 for qualified passengers.



e-van

To meet the needs of frail seniors, Elk Grove went above and beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide paratransit services for all residents who are 75 years or older. e-van provides door-to-door service and assistance for riders using wheelchairs or needing help getting on and off the vehicle. The city purchased low-floor mini-vans to make riding safer and more reliable for people using canes and other mobility devices.

Elk Grove encourages seniors to use the regular e-tran system to go "wherever you want whenever you want!" A free training program teaches seniors how to plan their route, maneuver mobility equipment on and off buses and identify landmarks. Trainers even accompany riders to help overcome their concerns about public transit. Older adults age 62 and above ride e-tran at reduced rates and those 75 and older ride for free.

Thanks to visionary leadership and a commitment that older adults be included in the life of the community, Elk Grove seniors are joining the "transportation evolution!"

For more information contact Rachel Chavarria at 916.687.3044 or rchavarria@elkgrovecity.org

Fresno Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA)

– Fresno is one of the few regions that took advantage of long-standing legislation to consolidate social service transportation programs (e.g. senior centers, adult day care, Head Start) under a single agency.

Centralized dispatching, vehicle maintenance and consolidated funding produce more efficient and less costly transportation for multiple agencies and their clients. The City and County of Fresno contribute a portion of their state transportation dollars and are official CTSA co-designees with the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, the transportation provider. Participating social service agencies over-match the public funding and receive more transportation for their clients than they could otherwise provide. Further information: Rob Weyant, 559.263.8005, rob.weyant@fresnoeoc.org

Oceanside's Solutions for Seniors on the Go

– Oceanside's multi-faceted program is providing new transportation options for residents 65 years and older to get to their medical appointments, the grocery store and social events. The city teamed up with Yellow Cab to offer seniors heavily discounted taxi rides (\$20 worth of scrip for \$7). A new shuttle service, funded through a grant from the Genentech Foundation, provides door-to-door service anywhere in the city and to health appointments in surrounding areas. A new program about to be launched, will reimburse volunteer drivers for trips to any location within the county. In addition to driving, the volunteers will assist seniors with grocery bags, getting in and out of buildings/elevators and other help as needed. Further information: Parks & Recreation, 760.435.5041