



# Passenger's Handbook



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# Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition

## Passenger Handbook

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## **VVCC Mission Statement**

Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition (VVCC) commits to supporting and encouraging older adults in their quest to age in place in their community of choice by enhancing their independence, promoting higher quality of life, and reducing barriers to happiness. This helps make the Verde Valley an attractive and sustainable retirement destination.

## **Summary of Our Demand Responsive Special Needs Transportation Service**

We appreciate having the opportunity to serve you. We know how important it is to get to medical appointments, shop for groceries and other items, and complete other important errands when you are not able to drive. VVCC provides transportation and other services to support you when you experience mobility challenges and need additional support to age-in-place in your home and in your community of choice. VVCC provides door-to-door service and door-through-door service, especially for grocery shopping and for individuals using assistive devices. Riders must have a safe and ADA compliant ramp at their point of pick up and destination to permit VVCC drivers to provide door-through-door assistance for riders using mobility assistive devices.

VVCC serves older adults and adults with disabilities living in the Verde Valley and surrounding area. Our transportation service can help you reach your destination in the Verde Valley and surrounding area. Although our transportation resources may be limited, we provide trips to Flagstaff, Prescott and the Phoenix metro areas. Due to limited resources to provide long-distance trips, we may only be able to provide trips out of the Verde Valley area for health care appointments.

Due to limited transportation resources, VVCC may use a ride brokerage process. This means that we may assist you with obtaining rides through other available resources including Cottonwood Area Transit. If you are qualified for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation through AHCCCS, we will ask you to use AHCCCS resources. If you have a family member or friend who is available to provide the ride, we ask you to first use your family member or friend for the trip.

Requests for rides and other services are coordinated through our Resource and Call Center. Neighbors must contact our Resource and Call Center to request a trip or other resources. Call Center specialists will arrange the trip with one of

our mobility vans or volunteers or through one of our contracted transportation providers, based on availability of resources and special aspects of the trip request. The policies and procedures in this handbook serve as a guide to our riders with the intent to clarify passenger responsibilities and support safety when riding with Verde Valley Caregivers.

Please see more about all the services VVCC provides at our Web site:

[www.vvcaregivers.org](http://www.vvcaregivers.org)

All policies and procedures in this handbook will be enforced in a consistent and fair manner. If you feel you have been treated unfairly, a comment/feedback process is included in this handbook.

Our goal is to provide the best possible transportation service to you when you are experiencing mobility challenges and can no longer drive.

### **Eligibility**

To enroll in Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition, please contact our Resource and Call Center at (928) 204-1238 to complete the initial eligibility interview by phone with one of our Call Center Specialists. Key points of eligibility include an inability to drive due to health conditions, disability or advanced age. If you are 80 years or older you are automatically qualified. Health conditions may be temporary, long-term or permanent. You are eligible for our services when you have a spouse, family or friends who can help, but are not always available. Please request rides with VVCC when family or friends are unavailable.

VVCC will also visit you in your home to complete the eligibility interview. This is an essential part of eligibility process. We must know your needs to best serve you.

### **Scheduling Rides and Service Hours and Holidays**

The Resource and Call Center is open for calls Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except on designated holidays. Please leave a detailed message when calling to arrange a ride outside of our normal hours, or when the line may be busy. **Resource and Call Center: (928) 204-1238.**

All requests for rides should be made five business days in advance or earlier. A limited number of weekend trips may be available with advance notice. Our current transportation resources are available primarily Monday through Friday. Please make requests for rides to destinations outside the Verde Valley area as far in advance as possible, allowing at least 10 business days or more for us to make arrangements. **VVCC is only able to provide rides up to the limit of its available resources.**

The Resource and Call Center will be closed on the following holidays and we are unable to provide rides on these days:

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King Day  
Presidents' Day  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Veteran's Day  
Thanksgiving Day and Friday after Thanksgiving  
Christmas Eve Day  
Christmas Day  
New Year's Eve Day

Service hours and holiday closures are subject to change. Call the Resource and Call Center for updated hours and holiday schedule.

### **Other Important Details for Scheduling a Ride**

- If calling before or after our regular hours, riders may make a ride request by leaving a message on the answering machine. Messages are checked at 9:00 a.m. and at 4:30 p.m., and routinely throughout the day on regular days of service. No immediate response is possible outside of regular office hours.
- When scheduling your ride, please provide your first and last name, phone number, your appointment date, time, trip purpose, destination and the estimated time you will need at your destination.
- Be ready to board within 5 minutes of the driver's arrival – our drivers must maintain their schedule. If you are not ready to board when the driver arrives you will create a problem for the next rider on the driver's schedule and may cause them to miss a critical appointment.

- If you wish to arrange multiple destinations for your trip, you must let us know each destination and the total estimated time for each destination. We must know this to efficiently schedule our volunteers and other available resources for rides.
- Service animals, recognized under titles II and III of the ADA, are allowed to accompany riders. Please thoroughly read and follow the provisions of the section on Individuals with Service Animals. Though not required, we do appreciate knowing about your service animal at the time you request the ride.
- There is no eating of food or drinking beverages allowed on any vehicles operating as a part of VVCC transportation services. Water is allowed in bottles or other containers that will not spill or break if dropped.
- **PLEASE REMEMBER! If you change or cancel your trip, you must contact the Resource and Call Center immediately to allow us to notify our volunteer, or other drivers, so they can serve other riders in need of transportation. We cannot waste scarce transportation resources!**
- You may schedule a standing ride request, such as for dialysis, therapy or other recurring appointments. **Riders must notify the Resource and Call Center of changes or cancellations to a standing ride schedule at least one day or more in advance.**
- Drivers cannot take ride requests or changes to your standing ride schedule. **YOU MUST MAKE CHANGES TO AN EXISTING RIDE OR SCHEDULE A NEW RIDE BY CONTACTING THE RESOURCE AND CALL CENTER AT (928) 204-1238, AS SOON AS YOU KNOW OF THE CHANGE.**
- Drivers will assist with shopping bags. Shopping bags or packages must be able to fit securely in the vehicle. We do not transport furniture or large items.

### **Rides to Destinations Outside the Verde Valley Area**

VVCC provides a limited number of trips to Flagstaff, Prescott and the Phoenix metro area, based on available resources. These trips may require from 4 hours to all day. If you need extensive assistance at your destination, or assistance with transferring in and out of a wheelchair, please inform the Resource and Call Center at the time you request the ride. You may need to provide your own personal care attendant for the trip.

Please contact our Resource and Call Center at least one to two weeks in advance to make arrangements for out-of-the-area rides.

## **Voluntary Contributions**

You may make a voluntary contribution toward the cost of our transportation services. Each trip within the Verde Valley area costs us approximately \$28.00 round trip. Each round trip to destinations outside our area costs VVCC approximately \$120.00 or more, depending on the destination. We ask you to please consider making a monthly donation to VVCC, or as often as you can, to help us cover the cost of providing rides. Any amount you can contribute makes a difference. Contribution envelopes are included in your enrollment packet and we are delighted to provide you with additional contribution envelopes at your request. We will not deny you service if you are unable to contribute. We deeply appreciate your support. Thank you for helping to make this vital service possible. It is our pleasure to serve you!

## **Disruptive Behavior and Refusal to Serve**

If a rider is violent, disruptive, or engages in illegal conduct, Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition (VVCC) may, consistent with this policy for all riders, refuse to carry the passenger in any volunteer owned private vehicle or owned, rented or contracted vehicle utilized by VVCC in its transportation service. A person who poses a significant risk to themselves or others may be excluded from VVCC services if reasonable modifications or accommodations will not eliminate that risk.

Definition of Disruptive Behaviors/Direct Threat:

Behaviors that may cause an immediate exclusion from VVCC transit services include:

- Destruction or serious damage to any vehicle serving VVCC's transit program
- Doing violence to others or to oneself
- Behavior that is unruly, disruptive, threatening, or frightening to others
- Behavior that interferes with the safe operation of the vehicle
- Failing to control one's service animal
- Engaging in illegal conduct
- Other conduct judged by VVCC to represent an actual or potential threat to the health, safety or well-being of oneself, the driver, other passengers, volunteers, or staff.

### **Administrative Appeal**

Passengers who have been excluded from VVCC's transit service due to a direct threat have the ability to request an administrative appeal by contacting VVCC's Executive Director at (928) 204-1238.

### **Seat Belt Policy**

All passengers of VVCC, riding in volunteer owned private vehicles, VVCC owned, leased or contracted vehicles, are required to wear a seat belt. Passengers who refuse to wear available seat belts will be denied service.

### **Mobility Device Securement**

All persons using mobility devices are required to have their device secured while aboard a VVCC owned, leased, or contracted service vehicle. The driver may decline service to a rider who refuses to allow his or her device to be properly secured.

### **Escorts and Attendants**

Personal care attendants/escorts are persons who are directly involved in the mobility assistance of their attendees and will be allowed to ride but are required to follow all other policies.

Personal care attendants provide all necessary care and assistance to a rider before, during and at the rider's destination. An escort accompanies the rider to give guidance and/or assistance to the rider at their destination.

### **Service Cancellations Due to Severe Weather Conditions**

In the event extreme weather conditions exist within the Verde Valley area or at the planned destination that would make travel unsafe, VVCC reserves the right to discontinue services for all trips until weather and road conditions are safe for travel.



## **Lift and Ramp Capabilities and Services**

VVCC owned and contracted vehicles are equipped with ramps and lifts. In accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a wheelchair or mobility aid that exceeds 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length or weighs more than 800 pounds when occupied may be refused transportation. Special accommodations to those using mobility devices exceeding the dimensions of wheelchairs and other mobility devices under ADA regulations may be approved by the Call Center Team Leader or the Executive Director. Requests for special accommodations must be made at least 48 hours in advance travel date.

## **Assisting Passengers in Mobility Device Up/Down Steps**

VVCC drivers are not permitted to assist passengers in mobility devices up or down steps on non-ADA compliant ramps. If such a condition exists passengers are responsible for arranging assistance.

## **Individuals with Service Animals**

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, service animals shall be permitted to accompany passengers. A service animal is an animal that is especially trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. Emotional support animals, comfort animals, and therapy dogs are not service animals under Title II and Title III of the ADA. The work performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

The handler is responsible for the care and supervision of his or her service animal. If a service animal behaves in an unacceptable way and the person with a disability does not control the animal, VVCC will not allow the animal to accompany the passenger on vehicles owned by VVCC volunteers or owned or contracted by VVCC while providing VVCC trips. Service animal handlers are asked to use a harness, leash, or tether to secure their animal, especially while the vehicle is in motion. The animal is not allowed on the seats & must sit on the floor near the passenger. The animal must be housebroken. The animal should be vaccinated in accordance with state and local laws. VVCC drivers are not required to provide care or supervision of a service animal, including cleaning up after the animal.

## **Medical Emergencies**

- Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition is not an emergency response transportation service. If you require emergency medical attention, please call **911**.
- If a medical emergency occurs while VVCC is transporting a passenger the driver will contact **911** for emergency assistance.

## **Rider Feedback and Complaint Procedure**

Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition is committed to providing safe, reliable special needs transportation services for eligible adults. We value our riders' experience, and their feedback is important to help VVCC grow and improve its transportation service.

The VVCC customer feedback and complaint procedure has been established to ensure that riders have an easy and accessible way to provide feedback. VVCC is open to hearing any customer feedback including complaints, comments, suggestions, or concerns.

Please complete the Rider Comment/Feedback Form and send to VVCC.

### **Contact VVCC:**

#### **By Mail:**

You may mail your feedback to:

Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition  
299 Van Deren Rd., Ste. 2  
Sedona, AZ 86336

#### **By Phone:**

Riders can contact VVCC at (928) 204-1238. Office hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with voicemail available after hours and on holidays.

#### **By Fax:**

Riders can send written feedback by fax to (928) 203-9503.

**By Email:**

Riders may contact VVCC by email to: [kentellsworth@vvccaregivers.org](mailto:kentellsworth@vvccaregivers.org)

**Feedback Review Process:** All feedback from customers is valued and will be reviewed.

- Rider concerns, complaints, or volunteer and employee commendations will be forwarded to the Operations Manager at VVCC.
- Rider recommendations for service modification will be forwarded to the Executive Director at VVCC.
- The VVCC Executive Director will respond to rider concerns or complaints within 2 business days. If the rider is dissatisfied with the response, they may appeal the decision. The VVCC Executive Director will review appeals and respond to the rider within 20 business days.
- Questions regarding discrimination or bias will be processed according to Title VI guidelines. Please see the printed guidelines regarding Title VI Non-Discrimination Complaints.

**Verde Valley Caregivers  
Rider Comment/Feedback Form**

Please copy and complete this form for any comment, complaint or commendation you may have regarding your experience with Verde Valley Caregivers transportation service.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Type of Request: (Circle One)*

Question     /     Suggestion     /     Complaint     /     Commendation

*Concerning: (Circle One)*

Volunteer service   /   VVCC Van   /   Cottonwood Area Transit   /   Servant's Heart

*Date of Service:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Write your comments / describe problem:*

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Would you like us to respond? (Circle One)   Yes   /   No

*Additional information:*

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*Mail to:*

VVCC

299 Van Deren Rd., Ste. 2

*Fax to:*

(928) 203-9503

*Call:*

(928) 204-1238

### **Title VI Non-Discrimination / Complaints and Appeals**

Any person who believes she or he has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, or national origin by Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition or one of our transportation service providers may file a Title VI complaint by completing and submitting VVCC's Title VI Complaint Form or by calling the Operations Manager at VVCC, (928) 204-1238. Title VI complaints can also be initiated by writing to:

Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition  
299 Van Deren Rd., Ste. 2  
Sedona, AZ 86336

Appeals may be presented in person at the above address. Questions concerning the appeals process can be answered by the Executive Director at 928-204-1238.

VVCC is committed to providing non-discriminatory service.

No one shall be denied a ride based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or any other consideration prohibited by law in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with VVCC. Please contact the **VVCC Executive Director at 928-204-1238**, or visit our administrative office at 299 Van Deren Rd., Ste. 2, Sedona, AZ 86336. For more information please visit [www.vvcaregivers.org](http://www.vvcaregivers.org).

A complainant may file a complaint directly with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) by filing a complaint directly with the corresponding offices of Civil Rights:

**ADOT:** Attn: Title VI Program Manager, 206 S. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave MD 155A RM: 183, Phoenix, AZ 85007.

**FTA:** Attn: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor-TCR 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590.

If information is needed in another language contact **928-204-1238**.