



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

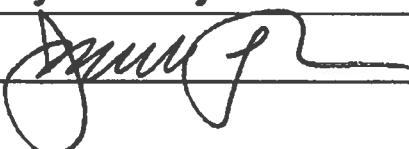
PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Hanover County
Program Title: Hanover DASH Specialized Transportation
Program Category: Transportation

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Debbie Preston
Title: Director of Community Resources
Department: Community Resources
Telephone: 804-365-4302 Website: www.hanovercounty.gov
Email: dapreston@hanovercounty.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: James P. Taylor
Title: Deputy County Administrator
Signature: 



HANOVER COUNTY'S SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

Vision Statement: To provide an affordable and reliable countywide transportation option to increase access, reduce isolation, and promote independence for older adults and persons with disabilities.



JULY 1, 2024

2024 VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES | ACHIEVEMENT AWARD SUBMISSION
Hanover County, Virginia

Executive Summary

Hanover DASH is a specialized transportation service, coordinated by Hanover County Department of Community Resources, for County residents aged 65 or older and/or persons who have a physical, cognitive, emotional, visual, or other disability, either permanent or temporary. The program was launched in 2019, made possible by Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's 5310 grant funds to include a county match. The service contracts with UZURV, an adaptive transportation network company and utilizes on demand ride sharing, medical sedan and wheelchair van services to provide an affordable (\$5.00 one-way ride) individualized alternative transportation option to prequalified users. The hours of operation are Sunday – Saturday 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. Service destinations include trips to all Hanover County government buildings, medical appointments, and personal business, such as grocery shopping, banking, employment and attending social and recreational programs. Registered riders can travel anywhere within the county as well as 7-miles outside the county line. The service area also includes specialized medical facilities within neighboring localities beyond the 7-mile buffer, including the local Veteran's Administration medical facility, in Richmond, VA and the medical facilities at Stoney Point.

The Problem

In the sprawling landscape of Hanover County, the need for specialized transportation, particularly in remote and rural areas, was becoming increasingly apparent. Despite its central location, Hanover County retains much of its historically rural identity. The County's suburban and business areas, as designated in Hanover's

Comprehensive Plan, are along the I-95 and I-295 corridors. In addition to the mix of agricultural and suburban areas within the county, Hanover is also one of Virginia's largest counties geographically, encompassing 471 square miles.

Hanover County does not have public transportation bus lines, and there are few affordable mobility options available for those not eligible for Medicaid transportation. Current transportation access for older adults and persons with disabilities is often provided by over-extended family caregivers or through use of a faith-based, non-profit volunteer transportation service such as Hanover Senior Rides, which is limited in terms of service area, wheelchair accessible transport, and only services eligible residents in the highly dense areas of the county (Mechanicsville and Ashland).

Furthermore, unlike their counterparts in the more densely populated regions of Mechanicsville and Ashland, individuals residing in the western areas of the county face significant challenges accessing essential services such as healthcare and employment. The vast distances to these amenities, coupled with obstacles of challenging terrain and limited internet connectivity, exacerbate the transportation disparity experienced by rural residents in places such as Beaverdam, Montpelier, Doswell, and Rockville. According to the US Census ACS 2022, Hanover County's population stands at 109,979, with seniors aged 65 and above comprising approximately 19.1% of the total population, surpassing the state average of 16.8%. As our senior population continues to grow, the importance of accessible and reliable transportation services becomes increasingly necessary, highlighting the significance of initiatives such as Hanover DASH in addressing the evolving needs of our community.

The Solution

To address the transportation disparities for older adults and persons with disabilities, especially in the more rural parts of the county, Hanover DASH countywide specialized transportation program was launched on December 12, 2019. The program came about because of collaboration between county administration, elected officials and DPRT, with input from community partners to create a countywide specialized transportation program made possible by FTA Section 5310 grant funding, leveraging federal, state, and local resources.

Hanover DASH hours of operation are Sunday through Saturday from 6a.m. to 6p.m. Hanover DASH contracts with UZURV, an adaptive transportation network company, and utilizes on-demand, ride sharing, medical sedan and wheelchair van services to provide an affordable (\$5.00 one-way ride), individualized, person-centered, alternative transportation option to prequalified users. The program offers the flexibility of door-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-door assistance. Eligibility criteria consists of verification of County residence and verification of age (65 or older) **or** disability (short or long-term).

Hanover DASH allows an option for a caregiver to accompany the rider with no additional charge (this option can meet the needs of current and/or potential riders that experience physical and/or cognitive barriers to traditional rideshare travel). Service includes trips to all Hanover County government buildings, medical appointments, and personal business such as grocery shopping, banking, employment, and social and

recreational programs. Service is available within Hanover County's expansive 471 miles of service area as well as a 7 -mile buffer beyond the county line, thus offering additional regional access. The approved specialized medical facilities within neighboring localities beyond the 7- mile buffer include transportation to the local Veterans Administration medical facility (Hunter Holmes McGuire) in Richmond and the medical offices at Stoney Point.

UZURV's technology offers options for riders to book through a 24/7 call center, as on-line booking options and the rider app are currently in progress and expected to go live by year's end. Hanover DASH staff have access to UZURV's booking platform to view real-time activity of rides as well as trip report data, which allows for greater transparency, quality assurance and customer service. One key initiative involves the recruitment of local drivers who possess intimate knowledge of the region's terrain and road networks, ensuring efficient and reliable transportation services. To incentivize driver participation in rural areas, UZURV has developed an incentive program that does not pass additional costs onto the Hanover DASH program but is integrated into UZURV's risk policy. This innovative approach encourages drivers to operate in underserved communities, thereby expanding our service footprint and enhancing mobility options for residents. Furthermore, the partnership with UZURV provides invaluable data insights that inform service delivery strategies. Leveraging metrics such as rider demand, trip origins, travel times, and availability of rides within the county and surrounding areas, provides a comprehensive understanding of transportation needs and usage patterns. This data-driven approach allows for

customizing services to meet the specific demands of different demographic groups and geographic regions, particularly in rural areas where access to transportation is most critical.

Harnessing technology, fostering partnerships, and prioritizing inclusivity paves the way for a more connected and resilient future of transportation for Hanover County. By showcasing Hanover DASH's efforts in addressing rural transportation challenges, the goal is to inspire other localities to adopt similar strategies and initiatives, ultimately fostering a more equitable and accessible transportation landscape across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Representing Innovative Approaches:

Partnering with the County's Budget Division of Finance & Management Services allowed for the streamlining of three critical Hanover DASH program processes to include: 1) maintaining a central registration database for all riders, including eligibility status; 2) reconciliation of vendor invoices; and tracking utilization by purpose, rider, district, and 3) other ride specific data for reporting to the Board of Supervisors and the grantor.

Budget first developed a custom SharePoint site for housing rider registration information. This captured the eligibility status of the rider, contact information, and district of residence. Next, an Excel model was created to reconcile monthly invoices. This model reduced the time spent on this task from days to less than an hour, which includes identification of any reconciliation errors. The end user simply copies and pastes information directly from the report of all rides and Excel identifies if the utilization

data does not reconcile to the invoice. Further, there are identifiers in the model to point to exactly which component of the invoice does not reconcile to the utilization. This process is faster, more accurate and allows for easier communication with the vendor to pinpoint issues. Finally, these two custom databases combine through the use of Excel PowerQuery and PowerPivot to produce information requested by both the Board of Supervisors and the grantor. Linking the SharePoint rider database to the utilization report used for reconciliation of invoices, allows for increased knowledge about the effectiveness of the program, including, but not limited to:

- a) Of the registered riders, how many are actively using the service?
- b) How is the service being used? In other words, what percentage of rides are for medical appointments, social outings, employment, etc.
- c) How many rides per month is the average rider booking?
- d) What days per week have the highest usage?
- e) What areas of the county are using the service the most?
- f) What is the average cost per ride?
- g) How many of our rides were for disabled residents versus the elderly?

Having easy and real-time answers to these questions helps direct decisions regarding marketing, contractor staffing needs and program modifications. This combined database also fulfills all of the grantor's reporting requirements to verify that funding is going to serve those it was intended to help.

Promoting Intergovernmental Cooperation:

Hanover DASH specialized transportation program, established on December 12, 2019, is a result of ongoing collaborative efforts between Hanover County Administration, Hanover County Department of Community Resources, the Central Virginia Transportation Authority, and The Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation. Partnering with transportation agencies, local businesses, and community organizations, allowed for leveraging of resources and expertise to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the Hanover DASH transit program. Further collaboration with community partners includes the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Virginia Department for Aging & Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Hanover Senior Rides, Senior Connections: The Capital Area Agency on Aging and from several assisted living facilities and apartment complexes in both Mechanicsville and Ashland.

Other efforts specific to Hanover DASH transportation coordination, thus far, relate to collaborative involvement with the volunteer driver program, Hanover Senior Rides, which continues to be an active service, however the limitations with wheelchair accessibility, service hours and capacity for expansion and administration needs highlight the value of a county coordinated specialized transportation service. Partnership with Senior Connections: The Capital Area Agency on Aging's Ride Connection program also played an important role in facilitating seamless services for callers that were identified as Hanover County residents.

From its inception, the county has focused on a collaborative approach to program management for Hanover, creating a Hanover DASH Advisory Workgroup, facilitated

monthly by the Hanover DASH Manager. Members of the Hanover DASH Advisory Workgroup include Hanover County Human Service departments (Community Service Board, Community Resources, Chickahominy Health Department, Social Services, and County Administration), an active DASH rider, a trusted member of the Latino community in Hanover County, and representatives of Hanover Senior Rides, Hanover County Council on Aging and Senior Connections' Mobility Manager for Ride Connection (the region's mobility management coordinating entity). This monthly meeting provides a mechanism for policy and program input, expanded expertise and service coordination. The DASH manager serves on several transportation-focused committees and organizations to include the NADTC, VAMM, HSTCE, CTAV, CTAA, and the Hanover County Human Services and Food Network groups.

Providing a Model for Other Local Governments:

Hanover DASH serves as a replicable model for other local governments seeking to improve transportation services within their own communities. The program's success in increasing ridership and enhancing mobility options demonstrates the potential impact of innovative transit solutions in addressing the evolving needs of urban and rural areas alike. The Hanover DASH Manager provided reciprocal best practice support to other providers in the region. On July 25, 2022, Hanover DASH Manager provided a presentation to Powhatan County Board of Supervisors, as they are looking to replicate Hanover DASH in their locality. On November 4, 2022, the Hanover DASH Manager, met with the Knowledge Advisory Group to share information on startup of Hanover DASH for

the Goochland County Community Action Program (GCAP) that is working on a strategic transportation plan for the clients who utilize their services.

The Financing and Staffing of the Program

Staffing for the Hanover DASH Specialized Transportation Program consists of the *Senior Service Specialist*, (who is also referred to as the "Hanover DASH Manager) which is a full-time position that currently dedicates 50% of daily duties related to the oversight and management of DPRT Section 5310 grant requirements, vendor billing, rider registration and community collaboration; and the *Director of Community Resources* who generates and submits the annual DPRT Section 5310 Grant funding requests and provides overall support of the program. The total cost of the DASH program for Federal FY23 (October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023) was \$ 466,453.00. The funding provided by DPRT, Section 5310 grant covered half of the *Senior Service Specialist's* salary, contractual transportation services and marketing/advertising for the program.

Operating costs: \$427, 730.00

- Federal Share 80% \$342,184.00
- State Share 16% \$68,436.80
- Local Share 4% \$17,109.20

Salary, Fringe, and Marketing: \$38,721

- Federal ARPA Funding *\$28,800.00
- Federal Share 50% \$4,960.00
- State Share 40% \$3,969.00

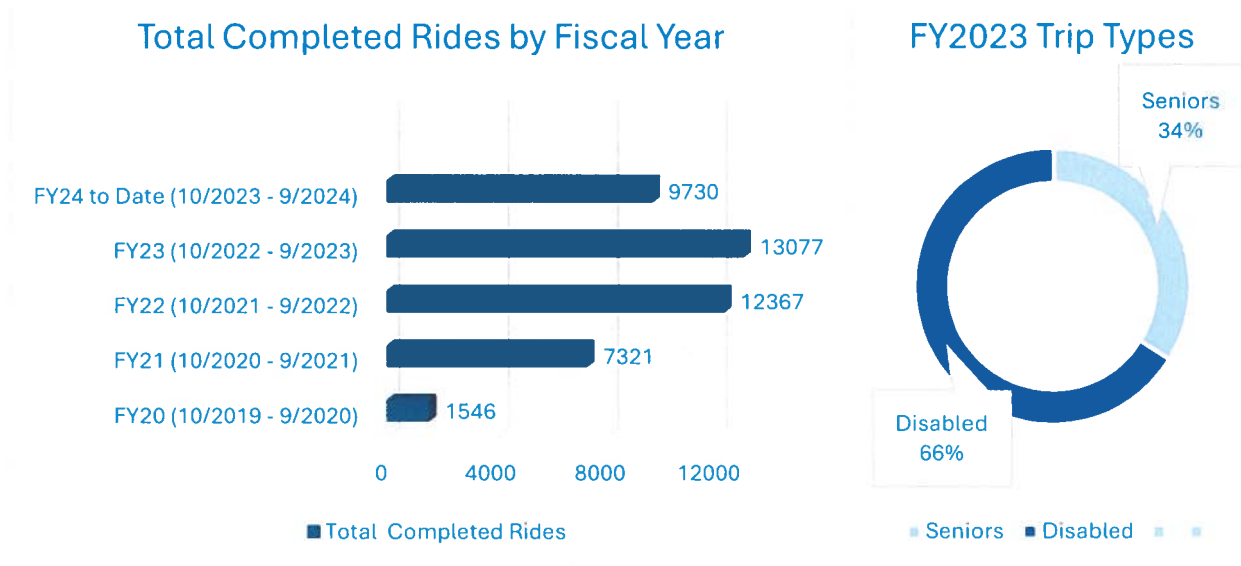
- Local Share 10% \$992.00

*Note: For Federal FY23, Federal ARPA funding in the amount of \$28,000.00 was allotted for salary, fringe, and marketing expenses. Traditionally, the shared expense for salary, fringe, and benefit costs via DRPT for Hanover DASH is listed above.

The Results

During the most recent federal fiscal year (October 2022 – September 2023), Hanover DASH completed 13,077 rides. Of the 13,077 rides, 4,435 trips were taken by Seniors and 8,642 trips were taken by individuals with a disability.

Since the program's inception in 2019, DASH has provided over 45,000 rides to residents of Hanover County.



The current DASH membership totals 847 registered riders. While drawing inspiration from existing transit programs, Hanover DASH has been customized to meet

the unique needs and challenges of our locality. Hanover DASH provides eligible riders transportation for life-sustaining purposes such as dialysis, and other medical necessities. In addition, Hanover DASH has given a level of independence to older adults and individuals with disabilities by providing them access to safe, affordable, and reliable transportation, which in turn alleviates the increased demand of inconveniencing friends or working family members/caregivers, which is an unsustainable solution.

Hanover DASH continues to provide a vehicle to reduce social isolation of seniors and persons with disabilities by providing transportation to social events and errands and allows individuals to remain vital contributing members of the community. Through continuous evaluation and adaptation, innovative approaches have been implemented to service delivery, customer engagement, and technology integration, ensuring that Hanover DASH remains at the forefront of transportation innovation. By providing innovative solutions, intergovernmental cooperation, and a commitment to serving all residents, Hanover DASH is not only bridging transportation gaps but also setting a precedent for other local governments seeking to enhance mobility and accessibility in their own communities.

Hanover DASH has significantly contributed to enhancing the quality of life and economic vitality of the county. Providing accessible, reliable, and sustainable transportation options empowers residents to access employment, education, healthcare, and recreational opportunities, thereby fostering a more inclusive and vibrant community. Access to affordable transportation isn't just about getting from point A to B;

it's about creating healthier, more connected communities. DASH surveys its riders annually to gain insight into the quality of the program and assess for any necessary changes. Rider comments and feedback have led to changes in the operating hours, which now include Sundays and reductions in copay.

Letter Correspondences from Registered Riders

“To Hanover County,

My sincere appreciation for the blessing DASH is to our community! DASH came to my rescue! And I do appreciate it more than you can imagine! Thanks to DASH, I am now able to run errands and get to appointments without inconveniencing friends and/or family ~ and affordably. Thank you so much Hanover County for thinking of us, the aging and aged of our community.

Sincerely, Mary H.”

“To Whom it May Concern,

My names Lousie B. I've been using Hanover DASH program at least six months or more. This service had been a tremendous help in my life. I'm able to attend church, shopping, activities that I was limited to. I take this time out to thank you all for the dedication you've showed toward me. The drivers are very friendly and concerned about my needs. My God continue to bless you all and keep up the good work.

Sincerely, Louise B.”

To learn more about Hanover DASH Specialized Transportation and/or view the video about the service please visit www.hanoverdash.org