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Getting Seniors Moving Through Broome County

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GETTING SENIORS MOVING THROUGH BROOME COUNTY

BY

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BA, University at Buffalo, 2009

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters in Public Administration in the Graduate School of
Binghamton University
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Accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
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in the Graduate School of
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2014

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Executive Summary

Faith in Action (FIA) is interested in expanding and restructuring its transportation program for seniors. FIA lacks the volunteers and program structure to serve all 449 clients. In 2013, transportation accounted for 66% of requested services, while only 30% of active volunteers are willing to provide transportation services. FIA is interested in learning volunteers' motivations and the best practices for volunteer recruitment and management, as well as the most effective way to structure a volunteer-provided transportation program.

To research these issues, I administered surveys to volunteers and conducted interviews with similar organizations. Six organizations participated in the interviews, and 26 existing FIA volunteers, who were not providing transportation services, completed the survey, representing a 31% response rate. This research led to four key findings: 1) personal safety issues and liability are key concerns of volunteers when providing transportation services; 2) word of mouth is the most common and successful recruitment method for transportation programs; 3) recent retirees are a key volunteer group transportation programs should try to recruit; and 4) senior transportation programs often incorporate elements such as the provision of incentives, volunteer recognition, use of computer technology and reasonable minimum time requirements for transportation requests.

Based on the findings, I make three recommendations: 1) discuss common safety issues and concerns at the volunteer orientation, as well as clearly communicate if any liability protection is provided by FIA; 2) focus recruitment efforts on word of mouth through FIA constituents, as well as targeting local recent retiree groups; and 3)

restructure the transportation program by reducing the minimum time requirement for transportation requests, transitioning to a software system or database, offering competitive gas mileage reimbursement rates and expanding volunteer recognition efforts.

Dedication

To my amazing and supportive husband Jobe and to the woman I have always looked to as a role model, my wonderful mother.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank several people who provided guidance, support and patience during a very intense year.

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Problem Statement

Faith in Action (FIA) is a 501 (c)(3) (nonprofit) organization that provides assistance to seniors, individuals living with disabilities and their families through a network of volunteers in order to support independent living and promote dignity and quality of life. FIA does this work throughout Broome County through one of five programs. In 2013, the organization provided services to 449 clients with 296 volunteers.

FIA utilizes volunteers to perform many tasks throughout the organization because there is only one full-time and one part-time paid position at FIA. Some of the volunteer work carried out at FIA is indirect service such as making phones calls, entering data into the computer and filing paperwork. However, the majority of the volunteers provide services directly to clients. Examples of these direct services are transportation, friendly visits, reassurance calls and grocery shopping. The goal of providing these services is to reduce the burden on the clients and promote independent living. Increasing the number of people able to maintain their independence reduces costs such as those related to transportation and institutionalization (K. Bunnell, personal communication, October 21, 2013). By increasing the FIA volunteer base, more people within the community can be served, therefore reducing costs for clients..

Over the last few years, the number of clients has increased while the number of volunteers has declined because of a lack of new volunteer recruits, current volunteers leaving the program and current volunteers' unwillingness to provide transportation services. Most of the volunteers who have left the program have left because they have become too old to volunteer or have returned to the workforce due to economic hardship (J. Kays, personal communication, October 28, 2013). In 2010, the ratio of total

volunteers to total clients was .75:1. However, in 2012, the ratio of volunteers to clients declined to .61:1

Although FIA provides various services, transportation accounts for approximately 75% of requested services (J. Kays, personal communication, November 13, 2013). One of the largest needs facing the aging population in Broome County is transportation services (K. Bunnell, personal communication, October 21, 2013). From January 1, 2013, through November 18, 2013, FIA fulfilled 1,213 requests for services. Of those requests, 807 were for transportation, representing 67% of total fulfilled requests. Currently, there are 221 active volunteers at FIA, of whom only 66 are willing to provide transportation services. Of these 221 active volunteers, only a small number provide services of any kind, which accounts for the difference in active volunteers versus volunteers who fulfill requests for services.

Increasing the number of volunteers willing to fulfill transportation requests is important to FIA for two reasons. First, FIA's Program Director identified lack of volunteers as one of the most critical problems within the organization (J. Kays, personal communication, October 21, 2013). From January 1, 2013, through October 22, 2013, FIA was not able to fulfill 54 transportation requests due to a lack of volunteers. Second, the lack of volunteers to fulfill transportation requests for services has exhausted current volunteers. Based on a research project for a social work program evaluation course, several FIA office volunteers expressed a need for new volunteers because there are a number of volunteers repeatedly contacted to fulfill transportation requests for services (anonymous volunteer 1, personal communication, October 21, 2013; anonymous

volunteer 2, personal communication, October 28, 2013; anonymous volunteer 3, personal communication, October 30, 2013).

FIA would like to learn more about how to increase the number of volunteers willing to provide transportation services since these types of requests are the greatest need of the organization. This report will focus on determining how to recruit new volunteers and effective ways to structure the transportation program by researching strategies and program structures used by organizations of similar size, location and mission. The report will also determine the reasons some current volunteers at FIA are unwilling to provide transportation services. By exploring the reasons FIA volunteers are reluctant to provide transportation services and effective methods of recruiting and program structuring, this report will help to expand FIA's volunteer base for transportation requests and fulfill unmet requests for services.

Transportation for the aging population is a growing problem that affects both the public sector and nonprofit sector. Between 2000 and 2030, the population of adults age 65 and over is expected to double from 35 million to over 70 million (Hrostowski, 2010). One of the most prominent access barriers identified for aging individuals is transportation, and with the rapid growth of this population, transportation options must be abundant in local communities in order to support aging in place (Solway, Estes, Goldberg, & Berry, 2010). With the increased need for transportation services as this population grows, the public sector will likely have insufficient resources to fulfill the needs of this population. Volunteer-based transportation programs will become essential services that could surpass public transportation options (Freund & Vine, 2010). The

knowledge gathered in this report will enhance the ability of these types of programs to recruit and retain volunteers to provide transportation services.

Research Questions

1. How can FIA increase the amount of volunteers to fulfill transportation requests for the organization?
2. How can FIA restructure the transportation program to better serve clients and recruit more volunteers?

Literature Review

Literature specific to volunteer transportation programs for seniors is limited. For that reason, this literature review will focus specifically on effective methods of volunteer management. First, I will give an overview of volunteers' motivations and the benefits of volunteering to understand the reasons people volunteer. Next, I will discuss effective methods of volunteer recruitment. Finally, I will identify successful methods of volunteer management used to retain volunteers after recruitment.

Volunteer Motivations and Benefits

Understanding volunteer motivations and benefits is crucial to recruiting, retaining and managing volunteers (Brudney, 2010). Although there are a wide range of volunteer motivations, one of the most common reasons for people to volunteer is to gain job skills and improve career opportunities (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2004; Merrill, 2005; Hopkins, Meyer, McLennan, Sharp & Sheffield, 2012). College students in particular volunteer in order to further their career paths (Gage & Thapa, 2012). Others have volunteered to explore possible fields to pursue for their careers. In a survey of 200 of UK's leading businesses, 73% of employers stated they would hire an

employee who has volunteered over someone without that experience (Merrill, 2005). Volunteers gain many benefits that may improve their abilities to perform job-related tasks and may increase the likelihood of employment.

Volunteering also offers opportunities for people to gain social skills through interactions (Brudney, 2010). Volunteers gain interpersonal skills by working with other people and learning to communicate better with others (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2004). These opportunities help volunteers' ego development and can improve their self-esteem. When volunteering within an organization, many people feel a sense of belonging and acceptance within a group (Hopkins et al., 2012). Volunteering has personal benefits, but also helps to connect people with their communities.

In addition, volunteering provides opportunities for people to engage with their communities, gain new experiences and meet a diverse range of people (Merrill, 2005). Many people volunteer in order to help others and serve their communities (Gage & Thapa, 2012). In fact, some volunteers state they feel a sense of obligation to their community and therefore volunteer out of a sense of duty (Hopkins et al., 2012).

Volunteer Recruitment

Understanding the benefits of volunteering and volunteers' motivations is a critical component of volunteer recruitment. Developing an effective volunteer job description is one of the most important aspects of recruiting volunteers. The description should include the important components: job title and purpose, qualifications, time requirements, proposed starting date, and job responsibilities (Brudney, 2010). By providing descriptions, it helps to convey role expectations and gives legitimacy to the role (Hopkins et al., 2012).

Recruitment appeals should be strategically written to entice volunteers. The appeals should have a good opening with a message that will attract volunteers (McCurley, 2003). The appeal must also present a complete picture of the volunteer opportunity (McCurley, 2003). When presenting a timeline of the volunteer obligations, volunteers will be more likely to make a short-term commitment (McKee, 2014). Finally, the description should be inviting to volunteers and not seem make it like applying for the position will be too difficult (McCurley, 2003; Brudney, 2010). The methods used to distribute the recruitment appeals are equally as important.

Outreach through various means, including reaching out to stakeholders and collaborating with local organizations, is essential to ensure effective volunteer recruitment (McKee, 2014; Brudney, 2010). Specifically, partnering with other agencies that have similar missions will increase the likelihood that volunteer recruitment methods will be effective (Hendricks, Audino, Okin & Biernacki, 2008). Common recruitment practices include media events, community meetings, and flyers (Vinton, 2012). However, some research indicates that informational meetings and presentations to civic groups are some of the most effective methods (Hendricks, 2008; Vinton, 2012). Using social media is also an effective and innovative means to recruit volunteers. Websites such as idealist.org and volunteermatch.org are helpful tools to broaden organizations' outreach capacities (The Social Animal, 2010; Hendricks, 2008). The web provides opportunities for organizations to recruit volunteers with ease for both the agency and volunteers.

Volunteer Management

Once volunteers are recruited, organizations need to work hard to retain volunteers using effective volunteer management practices. Effective volunteer management requires consistent communication and coordination between staff and volunteers (The Social Animal, 2010). After recruitment, volunteers must receive sufficient training to prepare them for their roles. Training should include role expectations, as well as overall volunteer expectations, which may include some form of sensitivity training to ensure volunteers will be responsive to all clients' needs (Marx, Davis, Miftari, Salamone & Weise, 2010; Hiatt & Jones, 2000). Volunteer training should be ongoing to ensure volunteers feel continuously supported by the agency (Leviton, Herrera, Pepper, Fishman & Racine, 2006).

In addition, supervision and support are essential components of volunteer management. Holding meetings with all volunteers is an effective method to provide support to volunteers, as well as build trust and social capital among volunteers (Brudney, 2010; Hopkins et al., 2012; Hendricks et al., 2008). Supervision should include managing limitations of volunteers, such as physical limitations or skills required to perform duties, to ensure both the volunteers' and clients' safety (Kerkman, 2003). Supervision also provides an opportunity to build volunteer and staff relationships (Vinton, 2012).

Finally, recognizing volunteers for their accomplishments and asking volunteers about their experiences can help improve volunteer retention at an agency. There are multiple methods of volunteer recognition including acknowledgement at social events, media attention, certificates and personal expressions of gratitude by staff and clients

(Brudney, 2010; Haski-Leventhal, Hustinx & Handy, 2011). Another method of recognizing volunteers is by using a reward system. Different forms of monetary compensation are effective methods of recognition valued by volunteers, especially gas mileage reimbursement or gift cards (Hopkins et al., 2012; Hendricks et al., 2008; Starr, 2013; Hong & Morrow-Howell, 2013). Asking volunteers about their experiences will provide feedback on volunteer satisfaction, supervision and management, as well as volunteer and program efficacy (Brudney, 2010). Agency programming should incorporate all the components of effective volunteer management to increase likelihood of volunteer retention, as well as promote continuous volunteer recruitment.

This literature review identifies some best practices for recruiting volunteers and managing them to ensure satisfaction and continued volunteer service. This study will research the concerns volunteers have about providing transportation services for seniors by surveying current volunteers. Additionally, agencies with similar missions will be interviewed to determine the best practices for recruiting and managing volunteers providing transportation services.

Methodology

For the purpose of conducting this research, I will collect data using both surveys and interviews. By using both qualitative and quantitative research, I will have a more thorough understanding of how FIA can satisfy the transportation needs of the population it serves. This section will provide an overview of data collection and analysis of data, as well as the strengths and limitations of this research approach.

Data Collection

To determine volunteers' concerns about providing transportation services for FIA clients, I administered surveys to existing FIA volunteers who are not currently providing transportation services. Prior to collecting data, I received approval from the Human Subjects Research Review Committee at Binghamton University to conduct all my research according to ethical standards (see Appendix A). I asked volunteers to complete a 22-question survey, which included 2 open-ended questions, 14 questions that asked about respondents' level of agreement with certain statements, and 6 demographic questions (see Appendix B). Based on the literature review, I choose to focus the questions in the survey on learning about specific concerns and reasons that volunteers might not provide transportation services, as well as the conditions under which they may choose to provide transportation services.

I obtained volunteers' contact information from FIA's volunteer Microsoft Access database. I contacted 83 volunteers to complete the survey, 31 of whom I sent an email requesting participation in the survey on-line through the internet survey program called Survey Monkey. The other 52 volunteers I contacted by telephone to complete the survey over the telephone. The survey took an average of 5 minutes to complete online and 8 minutes to complete over the telephone. I read an oral consent to all volunteers contacted by telephone prior to beginning the survey, and I required all volunteers contacted by email to read an implied consent prior to beginning the survey online. The surveys were administered from March 7, 2014, to March 17, 2014. Of the 83 volunteers contacted, 10 volunteers completed a survey online and 16 volunteers completed a survey over the phone, with a total response rate of 31%.

To determine effective volunteer management techniques, I contacted eight nonprofit organizations to participate in this study. All of these organizations provide some form of transportation services for the aging populations through the use of volunteer services. Due to the very specific type of program I sought for my interviews, most of the organizations were not located locally, but rather in various locations in the Northeast United States. I identified the organizations on the internet through various nonprofit search engines and selected all eight organizations based on similar programming objectives.

The interview questions consisted of 17 questions: 9 of were open-ended questions with various probes for more information when needed, and 8 of the questions asked for background information on the organization (see Appendix C). I conducted phone interviews with 6 of the 8 organizations, with a total response rate of 75%. The interviews were conducted from March 7, 2014, to March 13, 2014, and took an average of 31 minutes to complete over the phone. I assured all participants confidentiality and read an oral consent to describe their rights as a research participant.

I selected this design to ensure equity by incorporating input from both current volunteers and similar organizations. By gathering input both internally and externally on how to better restructure the transportation program and address volunteer concerns, this research design makes certain both sides provide equal contribution. This design also attempts to provide equal opportunity for all volunteers not providing transportation to participate in the research by contacting all volunteers by either email or telephone.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected through the volunteer surveys, I used descriptive statistics such as frequencies, averages and percentages (see Appendix D). To analyze the data collected in the organization interviews, I used thematic coding to determine common themes across all the interviews (see Appendix E). This form of analysis allows for a comprehensive overview of all the data collected in the interviews.

Strengths

The first strength of this data collection approach is the use of mixed-methods. By using mixed-methods, the likelihood the results are justifiable are increased (Abowitz & Toole, 2010; Millar & Dillman, 2011). Using qualitative and quantitative research provides a more comprehensive examination of the problem. The second strength of this data collection approach is using different groups' perspectives to provide a more holistic viewpoint of the issue I am researching. By including volunteers' perspectives in this research design, their concerns, hesitations and motivations will help to determine whether programming restructuring could address these issues. By interviewing similar organizations, the data provides information that can help FIA have a better understanding of other methods of recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers to provide transportation services.

Limitations

While there are strengths to my approach, there are limitations too. The first limitation is due to the very specific types of research participants needed for this study, the sample was restrictive and therefore not very large. The use of telephone surveys may be limited due to possible participants' schedules and inability to be reached by

phone when called, which may have affected the response rate for the telephone surveys. In order to address this issue, I called possible participants two times during the data collection period increasing the likelihood that I would reach them. Additionally, the internet survey may have been restrictive as well because it was accessible for only 10 days and some potential participants may not have checked their email in time to participate in the study, therefore decreasing the response rate. Millar and Dillman (2011) also discuss increasing response rates when doing internet surveys by using a mail follow-up. However, due to financial constraints, this was not possible in this research study. As an alternative, I sent a reminder email to possible respondents three days before the survey closed online.

The second limitation of this research design is that only one of the organizations I interviewed was located in Broome County. This may limit the ability to generalize the data gathered from the organization interviews, due to the lack of local representation in the sample and unique challenges encountered in Broome County. However, by choosing organizations that are similar in size, mission, number of volunteers and the types of clients served, I increased the likelihood that the findings would be generalizable to FIA.

The final limitation is an error in formatting for the online volunteer survey. The Likert scale questions were not set up so that participants could only choose one response. Therefore, in one survey where a respondent choose more than one response per question, I had to remove those questions from the data. I addressed this issue by editing the survey as soon as I noticed the error, which was after three surveys had been completed,

and included a bold, all capital letter statement notifying participants to choose only one response per question.

Findings

Based upon the descriptive statistics from the 26 completed surveys and thematic coding and analysis of the 6 organizations interviews, I identified four main findings from the data analysis. These findings include: 1) personal safety issues and liability are key concerns of volunteers when providing transportation services; 2) word of mouth is the most common and successful recruitment method for transportation programs; 3) recent retirees are a key volunteer group transportation programs should try to recruit; and 4) senior transportation programs often incorporate elements such as the provision of incentives, volunteer recognition, use of computer technology and reasonable minimum time requirements for transportation requests.

Finding #1: Personal safety issues and liability are key concerns of volunteers when providing transportation services.

Current volunteers who did not provide transportation were surveyed about 10 different factors that may influence their willingness to provide transportation services. Half of the respondents (50%) indicated they either strongly agree or agree that safety and liability issues were a concern when providing transportation. See Table 1 for breakdown of questions and responses regarding safety and liability.

Question	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/No Response
I am concerned that I am not properly prepared for personal safety issues that may arise when providing transportation services for Faith in Action clients.	50%	8%	27%	15%
I am concerned with the liability issues involved with providing transportation services for Faith in Action clients.	50%	12%	35%	3%

Table 1: Survey respondents' greatest concerns about providing transportation (based on the responses to the level of agreement questions on the survey)

The survey also asked respondents to identify up to three reasons they are hesitant to provide transportation. This open-ended question generated many responses, but as Table 2 indicates, safety concerns and liability were cited frequently as reasons. As indicated in Table 3, there were many common themes, but no other themes had a higher response rate of 23%, indicating that safety concerns is one of the greatest concerns associated with providing transportation services.

Please provide up to 3 reasons you are hesitant to provide transportation services for Faith in Action clients	Percentage of Respondents Identifying a Particular Concern
Safety Concerns	23%
Skills are better used with other volunteer services	23%
Time Consuming	19%
Old Age	15%
Liability	12%
Lack of Availability	12%
Never Approached	8%

Table 2: Reasons identified by more than one respondent why hesitant to provide transportation services (based on the open-ended survey question)

The organization interviews also suggest liability is a concern for volunteers. Of the six organizations representatives interviewed, all indicated they provide some form of liability protection for volunteers. In an attempt to alleviate liability concerns of volunteers, these organizations ensured liability protection for volunteers, clients and the organization, as well as communicated what liability protection is provided by the organization to the volunteers.

Although the survey and interviews indicate that safety and liability issues are areas of concern for volunteers, the volunteer sample and questions may have influenced the results of the volunteer survey. Seven of the respondents indicated they either were unable to drive, due to age or health issues, and six of the respondents indicated there were no conditions under which they would consider providing transportation services. These respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they had no issues related to providing transportation. Additional survey questions or a broader sample may have determined if

some of the other 10 factors could possibly influence volunteers' willingness to provide transportation, or whether none of the variables are applicable because respondents either cannot provide transportation or have no interest in providing these types of services.

Finding #2: Word of mouth is the most common and successful recruitment method for transportation programs.

The review of the literature on recruitment methods indicated that some of the most effective approaches included outreach through informal presentations, meetings and collaborations (McKee, 2014; Brudney, 2010; Hendricks, Audino, Okin & Biernacki, 2008; Vinton, 2012). All six organizations interviewees indicated they used multiple methods of recruitment but the most used and effective method is word of mouth.

Although five interviewees recruited at local churches, and four used newspaper ads, brochures, flyers and handouts, they all indicated that word of mouth was by far the most successful method, as well as the most cost-effective. The interviewee from organization 1 stated, "Word of mouth is the best recruitment techniques, especially by talking to friends and neighbors" (Organization 1 interviewee, personal communication, March 7, 2014). Additionally, the interviewee from Organization 5 stated, "Word of mouth through existing volunteers is the most successful recruitment method" (Organization 1 interviewee, personal communication, March 13, 2014). One particular organization had attempted to recruit volunteers by sending home flyers with children in all schools countywide. This particular method only generated one volunteer from this massive recruitment effort.

Finding #3: Recent retirees are a key volunteer group transportation programs should try to recruit.

Organizations were asked about key groups they try to recruit to provide transportation services. Of the six organizations, four indicated that recent retirees are a key target population for recruitment. These organizations indicated that recent retirees are an ideal match for these types of services. As the interviewee from Organization 5 stated, “Recent retirees have time on their hands and are looking for something worthwhile to do” (Organization 5 interviewee, personal communication, March 13, 2014). Many of the interviewees that identified recent retirees as a key recruitment group also indicated the importance of recruiting them as soon as they retire. First, they will be looking for ways to fill their time, so it is important that organizations are regularly reaching out to these types of volunteers through local employers or civic groups. Second, it is important to recruit recent retirees right after they retire so they have at least 10-15 years to drive before age and/or health limitations may affect their ability to provide transportation services. The interviewee from Organization 4 stated, “Recent retirees are a key population for recruitment because it’s a good age where they have a few good years of driving” (Organization 4 interviewee, personal communication, March 12, 2014).

Even though younger drivers were not identified as a key recruitment group, they may be essential in order to broaden the times and availability of transportation services throughout the day and week. The interviewee from Organization 5 stated, “Younger drivers are not as available, but they do more nights and weekends” (Organization 5 interviewee, personal communication, March 13, 2014). Due to insurance liability, the

organizations that did identify using younger drivers indicated drivers must be 21 and over. Further research should examine the impact younger drivers have had on similar types of transportation programs for seniors, as well as the benefits of intergenerational relationships developed in these types of programs.

Finding #4: Senior transportation programs often incorporate elements such as the provision of incentives, volunteer recognition, use of computer technology and reasonable minimum time requirements for transportation requests.

The review of the literature indicated that volunteer management incorporates several elements, some of which are the provision of incentives and volunteer recognition (Brudney, 2010; Haski-Leventhal, Hustinx & Handy, 2011; Hopkins et al., 2012; Hendricks et al., 2008; Starr, 2013; Hong & Morrow-Howell, 2013). This literature also discusses the importance of programming structure in order to ensure volunteer recruitment and retention. The organization interviews examined numerous program structures and volunteer management practices. Table 3 indicates the number of organizations that utilize some of the most common program structures identified in the six interviews.

Program component	# of organizations that utilize the component
Provision of incentives	5
Volunteer recognition	5
Use of computer technology/database	2
One week or less minimum time request requirement	5

Table 3: Most common program components identified by interviewees

Although 77% of survey respondents indicated that gas mileage reimbursement does not influence their willingness to provide transportation services, five of the organizations interviewed indicated that offering incentives is important and therefore provided them to volunteers. Three of the organizations indicated that gas mileage reimbursement was not solely important for volunteer recruitment, but also to indicate appreciation of volunteers' time and services. Two of these organizations also discussed volunteers' hesitations to receive such incentives, and the interviewee from Organization 3 recommended encouraging "volunteers to receive reimbursement and communicate the importance of them taking it" (Organization 3 interviewee, personal communication, March 12, 2014). This may explain why 77% of survey respondents indicated gas mileage reimbursement does not influence their willingness to provide transportation services. Volunteers may be reluctant to admit that they would like to receive gas mileage reimbursement because they are afraid they will be seen as greedy.

Five of the organizations recognized their volunteers. The one organization that did not utilize volunteer recognition was a new program that had only been in existence for four months. The other five organizations hold some form of annual volunteer recognition events. These organizations also discussed the importance of more informal methods of recognition. The interviewee from Organization 3 suggested using "cost-effective methods such as cards, letter, phone calls or just a simple thank you" (Organization 3 interviewee, personal communication, March 12, 2014).

Two of the organizations interviewed used computer software or a database. Although that number may not seem high, only three of the six organizations indicated whether they used some form of computer system, the other three organizations never

discussed what type of system they used to manage their transportation program. The interview questions protocol did not include a specific question about computer software use (see Appendix C). Of the six organizations interviewed, the organization with the largest client base (around 500) and the largest volunteer base (325 volunteers) utilized a computer system to manage its transportation program. Both programs used a computer system to match volunteers with clients for transportation requests. The interviewee from Organization 1 indicated, “The software has been great” when asked about recommendations for other volunteer transportation programs (Organization 1 interviewee, personal communication, March 7, 2014). The interviewee from Organization 5 also stated, “We never would have been able to grow to our current volume” without the use of a computer database (Organization 5 interviewee, personal communication, March 13, 2014).

Of the six organizations interviewed, five organizations indicated that the minimum amount of time in advance that clients must request transportation services was one week or less, and the remaining organization did not discuss whether there were any minimum time request requirements. The interview questions protocol did not ask about minimum time request requirements (see Appendix C); this information was revealed when interviewees were discussing how their transportation programs worked. Four of the six programs only required clients to request transportation three business days in advance, and one organization has no minimum time request requirement at all. Instead, clients can submit a transportation request at the moment they need a ride. These flexible time requirements allow clients to utilize the organizations’ services more often and are more accommodating to clients’ last minute needs.

Recommendations

Based on the four findings, the following recommendations will assist FIA in restructuring its transportation program and expanding its volunteer base to increase the number of clients served. These recommendations include: 1) discuss common safety issues and concerns at the volunteer orientation, as well as clearly communicate if any liability protection is provided by FIA; 2) focus recruitment efforts on word of mouth through FIA constituents, as well as targeting local recent retiree groups; and 3) restructure the program by reducing the minimum time requirement for transportation requests, transitioning to a software system or database, offering competitive gas mileage reimbursement rates and expanding volunteer recognition efforts.

Recommendation #1: Discuss common safety issues and concerns at the volunteer orientation, as well as clearly communicate if any liability protection is provided by FIA.

According to Finding 1, safety and liability issues are of great concern for volunteers who are currently not providing transportation services. A program such as FIA that is providing transportation services for a population that can be vulnerable at times must ensure that safety and liability issues are addressed and concerns are alleviated. Therefore, I recommend that FIA develop strategies to address safety issues that may arise when providing transportation services and incorporate these strategies into volunteer orientation, as well as any additional training that pertain to transportation services.

Liability is another key concern of volunteers. Finding 1 indicated that all interviewed organizations provide some form of liability protection for their volunteers.

FIA should consider offering some form of protection for volunteers, and more importantly, if any protection is provided, I recommend that FIA clearly communicate this to volunteers during orientation. This recommendation to incorporate safety protocols and liability protection into volunteer orientation relates to FIA's ability to be transparent to its volunteers. Transparency is a core value of public administration and should be incorporated as often as possible in organizational activities in order to gain organizational constituents' support and trust. This recommendation will broaden FIA's ability to be transparent to volunteers on two key issues that have been identified as key concerns when providing transportation services.

Recommendation #2: Focus recruitment efforts on word of mouth through FIA constituents, as well as targeting local recent retiree groups.

According to Finding 2, word of mouth is the most effective method of recruitment. In order for FIA to grow its volunteer base, I recommend FIA focus its recruitment efforts through word of mouth. FIA should attempt to utilize its current constituents, including other BCCC programs, BCCC board members and affiliates, and FIA staff and volunteers, in order to communicate the need for more volunteers. FIA should continue these efforts and ensure the need for more volunteers is clearly communicated to all constituents.

Finding 3 indicated that recent retirees are a key source of volunteers for this type of program. Although it seems that FIA has been targeting this population with 77% of survey respondents indicating they are retired, continuing to target recent retirees is vital due to the inevitability of aging of existing volunteers. I recommend that FIA target local retirement groups, as well as local employee groups such as teachers unions, in order to

continue to grow its volunteer base. FIA may also want to consider targeting younger drivers to help match clients who need transportation services at night or on the weekends.

Recommendation #3: Restructure the transportation program by reducing the minimum time requirement for transportation requests, transitioning to a software system or database, offering competitive gas mileage reimbursement rates and expanding volunteer recognition efforts.

FIA would like to serve more clients, and therefore it will be vital to restructure the program to efficiently manage a larger volunteer and client base. According to Finding 4, there are four ways that FIA should consider restructuring its program. I recommend that FIA reduce the minimum time request requirement from 10-14 days to one week or less. As indicated in Finding 4, five of the interviewed organizations had minimum time request requirements of one week or less. Although the program may experience an influx in requests for services, there is no way to know if FIA can accommodate these requests without attempting this restructuring. By reducing the minimum time request requirement, it will be possible to meet some of the last minute needs of FIA's clients. This also provides an opportunity to gain support for expanding volunteer base due to a growing need.

FIA currently utilizes a hardcopy system to manage the transportation program. This has continued to be a hindrance in efficiently managing the program, and as the program grows, this will continue to be a burden on managing this program. As indicated in Finding 4, two of the organizations utilize some form of computer system to manage their transportation program and both cite this aspect as the reason their programs have grown to their current volume. I recommend that FIA transition to using a

computer system to manage the transportation program to more efficiently handle the quantity of transportation requests. FIA should invest in a software system that can help manage its transportation program with ease.

FIA does currently offer some forms of gas mileage reimbursement to volunteers, but this is not offered consistently. As indicated in Finding 4, five of the organizations offer gas mileage reimbursement to all volunteers and mention the importance of doing so in order to show appreciation for the volunteers' efforts. I recommend that FIA explore other means to expand revenue in order to offer competitive gas mileage reimbursement rates for volunteers. This will also serve as a means to further communicate appreciation of volunteers' services. Although FIA does host an annual volunteer recognition event, it should continue to grow these efforts and by expanding the amount of gas mileage reimbursement provided, it will do so. Finding 4 also indicates that while five of the organizations hold formal recognition events, they highlight the importance of more informal methods of volunteer recognition too. I recommend FIA give volunteers more informal recognition through cards, letters, and phone calls.

Conclusion

As society continues to age and transportation continues to grow as an emerging need for the aging population, it will be important to develop and expand programs that can provide transportation services for seniors using volunteers. The findings and recommendations in this research will assist FIA to grow its current program and expand the number of clients served in Broome County. This research will also be useful to similar programs by providing relevant information on how to best recruit, manage and retain volunteers to provide transportation services for seniors.

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Appendix A-IRB Protocol Approval Letter

Binghamton University Mail - Human Subjects Protocol Approval

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Nicole A Zulu <nkrause1@binghamton.edu>

Human Subjects Protocol Approval

Diane M Bulizak <dbulizak@binghamton.edu>
To: nkrause1@binghamton.edu
Cc: klambrig@binghamton.edu

Thu, Feb 27, 2014 at 10:19 AM

Date: February 27, 2014

To: Nicole Krause, CCPA

From: Anne M. Casella, CIP Administrator
Human Subjects Research Review Committee

Subject: Human Subjects Research Approval
Protocol Number: 3216-14
Protocol title: *Lack of Volunteers to Fulfill Transportation Requests*

Your project identified above was reviewed by the HSRRC and has received an Exempt approval pursuant to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations, 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

An exempt status signifies that you will not be required to submit a Continuing Review application as long as your project involving human subjects remains unchanged. If your project undergoes any changes these changes must be reported to our office prior to implementation. Please complete the modification form found at the following link:

http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php

Principal Investigators or any individual involved in the research must report any problems involving the conduct of the study or subject participation. Any problems involving recruitment and consent processes or any deviations from the approved protocol should be reported in writing within five (5) business days as outlined in Binghamton University, Human Subjects Research Review Office, Policy and Procedures IX.F.1 Unanticipated Problems/adverse events/complaints. We require that the Unanticipated Problems/adverse events/complaints form be submitted to our office, found at the following link:

http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php

University policy requires you to maintain as a part of your records, any documents pertaining to the use of human subjects in your research. This includes any information or materials conveyed to, and received from, the subjects, as well as any executed consent forms, data and analysis results. These records must be maintained for at least six years after project completion or termination. If this is a funded project, you

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=73ef5c7119&view=pt&q=klambrig%40bingh...> 4/17/2014

Binghamton University Mail - Human Subjects Protocol Approval

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should be aware that these records are subject to inspection and review by authorized representative of the University, State and Federal governments.

Please notify this office when your project is complete by completing and forwarding to our office the Protocol closure form found at the following link:
http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php Upon notification we will close the above referenced file. Any reactivation of the project will require a new application.

This documentation is being provided to you via email. A hard copy will not be mailed unless you request us to do so.

Thank you for your cooperation, I wish you success in your research, and please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions or require further assistance.

cc: file

Kristina Lambright

Diane Bulizak, Secretary

Human Subjects Research Review Office

Biotechnology Building, Room 2205

Binghamton University

85 Murray Hill Rd.

Vestal, NY 13850

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Telephone: (607) 777-3818

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Appendix B
Volunteer Survey

ID _____

Date _____

Volunteer Motivations and Concerns with Providing Transportation Services Survey

Q1) Please provide up to 3 reasons you are hesitant to provide transportation services for Faith in Action clients:

Q2) Under what conditions, if any, would you be willing to provide transportation for Faith in Action clients (please provide up to 3 conditions):

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. Your options are Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Don't Know

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Q3) Transportation is a service needed by many Faith in Action clients.						
Q4) I am willing to provide transportation services for Faith in Action clients.						
Q5) I am concerned about having a client in my personal vehicle when providing transportation services for Faith in Action.						

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Q6) I am concerned that I am not properly prepared for personal safety issues that may arise when providing transportation services for Faith in Action clients.						
Q7) I am concerned with the liability issues involved with providing transportation services for Faith in Action clients.						
Q8) I would be more willing to provide transportation services for Faith in Action clients if there was gas mileage reimbursement.						
Q9) I would be more willing to provide transportation services for Faith in Action clients if I did not have to use my own personal vehicle.						
Q10) I would be more willing to provide transportation services for Faith in Action clients if I received additional training.						
Q11) I would be more willing to provide transportation services if I had more communication with Faith in Action staff about general volunteer issues and concerns.						
Q12) I would be more willing to provide transportation services if I had a better understanding of the needs of Faith in Action clients.						
Q13) I would be more willing to provide transportation services if I received regular supervision about my volunteer work from Faith in Action staff.						
Q14) I would be more willing to provide transportation services if there was some form of support services for volunteers to address any problems or concerns.						
Q15) I am satisfied with my current volunteer experiences through Faith in Action.						

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Q16) I plan to continue volunteering with Faith in Action for the next 12 months.						

Demographics

Q17) How long have you volunteered with Faith in Action? _____

Q18) What town/city do you live in? _____

Q19) How old are you? _____

Q20) What is your sex/gender?

Male

Female

Q21) What is your current occupation status?

Employed part-time

Employed full-time

Retired

Unemployed

Unable to Work

Q22) What do you identify as your race/ethnicity?

White

Hispanic or Latino

Black or African American

Native American Or American Indian

Asian/Pacific Islander

Other (Specify) _____

Thank you for your time and participation in this important research study!

Appendix C
Organization Interview Questions

Organization ID # _____

Q1) Tell me about your system for volunteers providing transportation services. How does it work?

Do your volunteers use their personal vehicles to provide transportation for clients?

Do your volunteers receive any form of incentive for providing transportation services (eg. gas mileage reimbursement)?

Do you provide any assistance in ensuring liability protection for volunteers providing transportation services?

Q2) What are some volunteer recruitment methods your organization uses?

Q3) What recruitment methods have been most successful?

Q4) What recruitment methods have been least successful?

Q5) Please describe the training process for volunteers.

Do you have any additional training for volunteers providing transportation services?

Q6) Does your organization focus on recruiting specific populations to be volunteers to provide transportation?

If so, which populations?

Q7) What, if any, barriers has your organization faced in recruiting or retaining volunteers that provide transportation services?

What strategies has your organization used to address these barriers?

Q8) Once volunteers are recruited; how do you manage volunteers?

What, if any, types of support services does your organization offer volunteers?

What forms of communications does your organization have available for volunteers?

What, if any, methods of recognition do your organization use to recognize volunteers' efforts?

Q9) If someone approached you about organizing a new transportation program provided by volunteers, what would you recommend?

Background Questions:

Q10) Location of Organization: _____

Q11) Position of Employee: _____

Q12) Number of Paid Employees: _____

Q13) Number of volunteers: _____

Q14) Number of clients served: _____

Q15) What percentage of your volunteers provides transportation? _____

Q16) What is your organization's operating budget? _____

Q17) What percentage of this is designated for your transportation program? _____

Thank you for your time and participation in this important research study!

Appendix D
Volunteer Survey Data Analysis

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	No Answer
Q3) Transportation is a service needed by many Faith in Action clients.	50% (13)	42.3% (11)	-	-	-	7.7% (2)	-
Q4) I am willing to provide transportation services for Faith in Action clients.	7.7% (2)	-	7.7% (2)	50% (13)	23.1% (6)	7.7% (2)	3.8% (1)
Q5) I am concerned about having a client in my personal vehicle when providing transportation services for Faith in Action.	7.7% (2)	34.6% (9)	15.4% (4)	11.5% (3)	19.2% (5)	-	11.5% (3)
Q6) I am concerned that I am not properly prepared for personal safety issues that may arise when providing transportation services for Faith in Action clients.	15.4% (4)	34.6% (9)	7.7% (2)	7.7% (2)	19.2% (5)	3.8% (1)	11.5% (3)
Q7) I am concerned with the liability issues involved with providing transportation services for Faith in Action clients.	7.7% (2)	42.3% (11)	11.5% (3)	19.2% (5)	15.4% (4)	3.8% (1)	-
Q8) I would be more willing to provide transportation services for Faith in Action clients if there was gas mileage reimbursement.	3.8% (1)	3.8% (1)	7.7% (2)	53.8% (14)	23.1% (6)	7.7% (2)	-
Q9) I would be more willing to provide transportation services for Faith in Action clients if I did not have to use my own personal vehicle.	3.8% (1)	15.4% (4)	3.8% (1)	46.2% (12)	26.9% (7)	3.8% (1)	-
Q10) I would be more willing to provide transportation services for Faith in Action clients if I received additional training.	3.8% (1)	7.7% (2)	11.5% (3)	53.8% (14)	23.1% (6)	-	-

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	No Answer
Q11) I would be more willing to provide transportation services if I had more communication with Faith in Action staff about general volunteer issues and concerns.	3.8% (1)	15.4% (4)	15.4% (4)	34.6% (9)	23.1% (6)	3.8% (1)	3.8% (1)
Q12) I would be more willing to provide transportation services if I had a better understanding of the needs of Faith in Action clients.	3.8% (1)	15.4% (4)	15.4% (4)	42.3% (11)	19.2% (5)	3.8% (1)	-
Q13) I would be more willing to provide transportation services if I received regular supervision about my volunteer work from Faith in Action staff.	-	15.4% (4)	7.7% (2)	50.0% (13)	23.1% (6)	3.8% (1)	-
Q14) I would be more willing to provide transportation services if there was some form of support services for volunteers to address any problems or concerns.	3.8% (1)	26.9% (7)	3.8% (1)	38.5% (10)	19.2% (5)	-	7.7% (2)
Q15) I am satisfied with my current volunteer experiences through Faith in Action.	50.0% (13)	38.5% (10)	3.8% (1)	-	-	-	7.7% (2)
Q16) I plan to continue volunteering with Faith in Action for the next 12 months.	42.3% (11)	38.5% (10)	-	11.5% (3)	-	7.7% (2)	-

Percentages (frequencies) of responses to Likert questions

Please provide up to 3 reasons you are hesitant to provide transportation services for Faith in Action clients	Percentage of Respondents Identifying a Particular Concern (frequencies)
Safety Concerns	23% (6)
Skills are better used with other volunteer services	23% (6)
Time Consuming	19% (5)
Old Age	15% (4)
Liability	12% (3)
Lack of Availability	12% (3)
Never Approached	8% (2)
None	4% (1)
Does not drive	4% (1)
FIA concern with respondent's health	4% (1)
Gas cost	4% (1)
Prefer other volunteer work	4% (1)
Doesn't drive after dark	4% (1)
Lack of strength	4% (1)
Discomfort driving in other areas	4% (1)
Bad weather	4% (1)
Transporting older people	4% (1)
Not interested	4% (1)
Uses public transportation	4% (1)
Doctor recommended respondent not drive	4% (1)
Retired	4% (1)

No ongoing commitments	4% (1)
Prefer using time for other activities	4% (1)
Never considered	4% (1)
Distracted driving	4% (1)
Prioritizing time	4% (1)
Waiting for clients	4% (1)
No one-on-one services	4% (1)
Low income	4% (1)
Lives too far away	4% (1)

Under what conditions, if any, would you be willing to provide transportation for Faith in Action clients (please provide up to 3 conditions)	Percentage of Respondents Identifying a Particular Condition (frequencies)
Emergency Only	23% (6)
None	23% (6)
Availability Change	12% (3)
Client Proximity	8% (2)
Escort using public transportation	4% (1)
Doctor release to provide transportation	4% (1)
Once in awhile	4% (1)
Friends & family only	4% (1)
Client familiarity	4% (1)
Would consider	4% (1)
Summertime	4% (1)
Weekends only	4% (1)
Using own vehicle	4% (1)
Schedule accommodation	4% (1)
Client sick/needs to go to hospital	4% (1)