Every Ride Counts: Pilot Projects Discuss Their Experiences

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MEREDITH BRATTON:

Hello everyone and thank you for joining us for the 'Every Ride Counts - Pilot Projects Discuss Their Experiences' webinar. Today is Tuesday, January 14th, 2025. Just a few, quick housekeeping.

The instructions for today's Zoom. All participants are muted. The session is being recorded and all materials, including the recording, will be put on the NADTC website by the end of the week.

Closed captioning is available. You can turn on the captioning/subtitles by clicking on the CC button at the bottom of your screen.

Please put any questions in the Q&A button. It will be open for the entirety of the webinar. The chat is open and can be used for general comments or technical assistance.

About the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. We are a partnership between USAging and Easter Seals and we are funded by the Federal Transit Administration. Our mission is to promote the availability of accessible transportation options that serve the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers and communities.

Now I will turn it over to Virginia Dize and Jeremy Johnson-Miller to talk to more about NADTC and today's webinar.

JEREMY JOHNSON-MILLER:

Hello everyone. I am the communications manager with NADTC. Just a bit about the programming that we offer at NADTC. First and foremost we are a technical assistance Center. We have an 800 number as well as a general email address that you can send all of your questions to, free of service. We love to get those questions.

We also do some training as well on various topics around accessible transportation.

We spent quite a bit more of our time on creating publications and different resources, different toolkits that we put together, again, on transportation and we can drop that link in the chat to where you can find all of those publications and resources as well.

We also create partnerships around coordination. Some of our efforts in the past few years have included diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives where we were collecting data and creating different educational opportunities around those topic areas, as well as coalition building, a coalition toolkit as well as our new community conversations toolkit as well. That will be coming out real soon.

And, as well as what you are going to hear today, we also have community grants that are available on an annual basis and so, we actually just kicked off that effort with our community grants and some pilot sites as well so you will be hearing a lot more about this projects coming up as they start generating some materials and getting some of their data together.

We hope to report that out once we get those going.

I mentioned where you can find us. You can find us on our website as well as through monthly E news.

Our website is NADTC.org. If you want to use the QR code on your screen that will take you directly to signing up for our monthly e-news or you will get all of the updated information of everything that we are doing, including grant opportunities or new materials that are coming out. A lot of information that would like to share with our followers as well. You can certainly follow us on social media, primarily we use Facebook and LinkedIn to get our information out, as well as YouTube where a lot of our recordings and different types of trainings are housed.

With that, I will turn it over to Virginia, where she will kick off today's session. You are on mute.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

I always do this, excuse me, people. Virginia Dize with NADTC. I work at USAging and I did want to point out that Meredith Bratton who introduced the session is one of our technical assistant specialists. If you use our toll-free number you are likely to speak with her or with her colleagues.

Just know that we are eager to receive your calls if you have any technical assistance questions.

I did want to say a couple of things about the NADTC website because we have made some changes and we are in the process of making some changes to the website.

We are very thrilled that we currently have these materials that were developed as part of our pilot project but right now we do not require registration any longer to access the Every Ride Counts materials.

We are pleased to make that change. Previously you had to register. You had to get a log in and once you did that you had access to the entire site. Well, right now you have access to the entire site. You can see it all, download materials, you can customize materials and use them in your own program.

We are in the process of reorganizing the Every Ride Counts site so that it is a bit more attractive and it is easier to navigate and stay tuned, we will be making an announcement of those changes in our e-news.

Without further ado we are going to move into today's presentations. We have five pilot sites that are represented.

Emily Braley and her colleague, and I will ask her to introduce her colleague when she starts speaking. They will be representing NV Rides in Fairfax, Virginia.

Jeff Keithly is unable to join us today so Jeremy is going to be providing the presentation on the Allen Regional Transit experience with Every Ride Counts.

They will be followed by Laura Loe from Hopelink in Redmond, Washington.

And then, Jeremy, once again, is going to be talking a little bit about the Mountain Rides pilot site.

And finally, but certainly not least, we will be following with Lynna Mitchell. With the Appalachian Area Agency on Aging and the experience of Four County Transit which is a transit organization that is affiliated with the AAA in Cedar Bluff, Virginia.

With that, I'm going to ask Meredith to turn to the next slide and turn it over to Emily.

EMILY BRALEY:

Hello, thanks for having us. Elena Alergant is my colleague and she will start.

ELENA ALERGANT:

Hello my name is Elena Alergant and I'm happy to be here to be here with my first time with NADTC. (indiscernible) we are in an organization that supports a network of volunteer drivers, programs that make transportation for seniors possible in northern Virginia area.

We serve in Fairfax, Arlington, Loudoun and Prince William. We have 15 partners. Please do the next slide. Thank you so much.

We have 15 partners in northern Virginia, most of them are Shepherd Center's and senior villages and also community centers.

What we do for them is outreach, the been part of our work for 2024 we did 60 outreach events in northern Virginia. These outreach efforts can help us increase our visibility through the community.

We collaborate with local senior centers and community organizations. We constantly do volunteer recruitment, tabling at community events and farmer markets. We also use social media for volunteer recruitment. We maintain a user-friendly website, engage with the community through social media platforms.

We distribute information materials and senior facilities, libraries and learning centers. We participate at local and community events. We support seniors with transportation issues.

Advocacy is an important part of her work and we participate in community planning meetings relating to transportation... Software schedule. It allows for us to keep track of volunteers, rides, clients, miles etc. we also facilitate ground checks for our partners.

Before I describe profiles of our riders and drivers, I want to give you some numbers from 2024. Our statistics for the last year. We provided more than 27,000 rides for seniors. We had more than 1000 riders and more than 700 volunteers.

But under those numbers are hiding the most important (indiscernible) part of our program, the people, our writers and volunteer drivers. Who are our drivers?

Often caregivers who benefited from programs like (unknown name). They say not to drive through their community. They are mostly retired, their average age is 69 years old and they use their own cars and gas.

Who are our riders?

They need to be a client with our partners. The average age is 79 years old so older than the drivers. They need to be independent cognitively and physically to get in and out of the car. They usually have limited financial resources and often chronic health conditions and limited family support. They really need people who can help them.

Through our outreach efforts we can find more volunteers to help them. Emily will tell you more about (indiscernible) that made volunteer recruitment more effective.

EMILY BRALEY:

When we first started with NADTC we sat down and they talked about how we recruit volunteers and how we do outreach. We of course need more volunteers. We have lots of writers and would love them but we always need more volunteers.

Most of the time we recruit our drivers in person. We love the idea of grip cards and we knew we were not reaching our whole community because we do not have materials created in Spanish, which is commonly in this area.

NADTC was amazing at helping us get materials trans-created, workshop with native speakers so that they mage sense linguistically and cognitively. It is a time intensive process. We had grip cards made for a volunteer drivers and riders, total of six, Korean, Spanish. We also looked at digital marketing and they help to set that up and our campaigns to recruit volunteer drivers.

Messages that are most effective are things about making friends, social connections and getting out of the house. This is kind of where we emphasized.

I will start with our print materials. These were great. Before NADTC stepped in with Every Ride Counts we will using a brochure, did not love it, had too many words was not popular. You can see it on one of the stands here.

NADTC help us make these Every Ride Counts records that were her high contrast and simple wording.

We had 24 libraries got the materials, eating public sites, some of which were restaurants, district supervisor offices. We got to Spanish speaking volunteers directly from these in the few months we did the pilot project. We recruited 39 volunteers which is an 8% increase in our baseline intake rate.

It was a great project. You can see what they look like and where they were living in the world.

Then we did a digital marketing campaign that was on meta-products, as Facebook and Instagram. Big reach, 160,000 post reach. 60% increase in Facebook followers. 355 leads which means people opened it. Many emails came to me, 55, from people who wanted to consider volunteering. I would say successful, eye-catching and we still use the materials. If you see is around you will see as with these materials. Thanks, NADTC and we will be using these going into the future. I will pass it on to the next speaker.

JEREMY JOHNSON-MILLER:

Great, that is me. As mentioned before, (unknown name) was unable -- Allen Regional Transit was unable to attend today but I worked with them and know what they were looking for. I have a few quick bits of information. Their priorities when starting this activity was they really wanted to create new materials because they were in the process of creating a new standalone, transit program.

Previously it was operated under their general organization Thrive Allen County. They are trying to branch off into Allen Regional Transit. It was good timing for them to join this project and help create materials that they were going to start using and promoting.

Really, because they are a new program, they really wanted to just increase the visibility within the communities that they serve. (indiscernible) (audio issues) just a newer type service with different branding and such and so they really wanted that help to increase the visibility.

They mentioned that they had a lot of working sites or facilities, factories in their area and so they had a lot of long-distance trips between different communities. So, that was a big priority to make that connection.

They had already been in connection with some of those facilities in factories to have a conversation about different work trips. So, those cue priorities are what we were working on with them as well.

Through this project, we were able to assist with creating 268 radio ads. Their primary focus, their way to get the word out was word-of-mouth and radio. They had not really had a lot of luck with doing a lot of social media outreach or placement of different ads, but radio seemed to work pretty well for them. That is why you see a really high number. Those of the radio ads they were working with.

They also had several localized newspapers and smaller town newspapers that they became out once or twice a week. They wanted help with placing those ads in the smaller town newspapers as well.

We did create some different graphics for them to use and generate on Facebook and Instagram. As with their Allen Regional, they did not have a Facebook page for that, so that was a part of this process in getting that started. Just having good graphics that they could use as a part of that newer service.

They wanted several flyers to be printed so they could go out to different events and when they were talking to people as well.

They wanted postcards as well that they could do mailings to get out the word to the people, as well as magnets.

The one unique thing I wanted to highlight is that they wanted a banner that they could use when going out to different events as well. We got to venture into that and getting it printed, large enough that they could use and so, they were really happy with that.

On the next slide I have an image of that banner that we created for them. It is 3' x 6'. They were able to put it on a wall during an event or along a table. 6 feet is a typical table size so that is where we got the 6 foot.

But they are able to use this now and promote their services when they are out in the community.

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Here is also an image of the poster that was created. As you can see on the left, it is kind of our standard branding that we were using throughout this campaign. On the back is where they can insert the address or where they are emailing it to. That is where you see that white block there on the right. That can be customized as well. As mentioned, they did a lot of mailings and outreach through the mail, so that was one of their priorities.

I believe that is, oh, I also wanted to include... With both of my groups we did radio ads but I wanted to include just (indiscernible) this came from the final report that we put out as well. Just a quick, simple, 30 second ad that was read and put on the radio between different segments. Quick and simple including the phone number to get a schedule ride.

In a nutshell that is their program at Allen Regional and I will pass it off to the next speaker.

LAURA LOE:

Hello everybody, my name is Laura Loe, I use she, her pronouns. I am a woman in my late 40s with brown and gray hair. I'm wearing a black sweater and a salmon colored shirt. The first slide shows some of our materials from the Every Ride Counts Campaign for subway material in Spanish and English, and infographic as well as our Palm card.

The Palm card is the most used that we are using today. I will describe it because that is still kind of our main thing that we are using today. Our inclusive planning process focused on large font and high contrast in our brand of colors.

There is a person seated in a wheelchair with a door that is opening and a person standing next to them, to represent volunteer transportation which is usually done in a personal vehicle.

Yes, that is kind of our main marketing we have been using.

What is Find A Ride? I am at the mobility team at Hopelink which is a community action agency in western Washington state. We were doing community testing for Find A Ride Trip Planner. It was such great timing with the Every Ride Counts Campaign. We were so happy to be part of this campaign. You can check us out at our website.

We have this challenge of communicating so many services. I will show in the next slide all of our services in our trip planner.

So, this has many, many logos. I will not read all of them but I will describe the types of transportation. We have fixed route transit, (unknown name) on-demand mixed with fixed route transit, volunteer, last mile solutions, monorail, ferries and more. I am not naming them all, tribal transportation, rule, across three counties.

We were trying to figure out how to communicate that and really appreciated the support from the Every Ride Counts Campaign as we developed different materials.

Lessons learned. We learned so much, a lot about accessibility from our committee, we have an inclusive planning process. We are part of the King County coalition (indiscernible) including people with disabilities. We are active in designing materials and providing feedback.

We focus on older adults and people with disabilities and trusted partners that were with folks with limited proficiency as well as (indiscernible) individuals. They were all involved with this process.

We had several advisory committees focusing on this process and really designed it with the community and had a lot of tough conversations about priorities about what we were communicating and so, we can go to the next slide.

Our community impact, as part of the Every Ride Counts Campaign. We got 800 lives in English and Spanish, 800 palm cards, 90 posters, 600 magnets, 120 infographics and a social media toolkit with six graphics. We relied on partnership marketing.

Although we don't have the social media presence that was mentioned earlier, we did not have that yet, but we did reline all of the advisory committee numbers to put on their social media that we were in this community testing things and we needed feedback about the trip planner.

The image on the slide showes somebody bending over a table to tester the trip planner. The Every Ride Counts materials are on the table and have high contrast colors that stand out. We also had folks from the community there, people with disabilities.

What was great was that our table sparked a lot of intense and wonderful conversations about specialized transit, the gaps, challenges and stuff at this event. It served to spark the community discussion that could lead to advocacy and policy changes.

And we saw an increase to our website, 25% increased during the Every Ride Counts Campaign. And 5% increase in the click through's to send an email to us which shows that our limited marketing, really just five marketing events with these materials, had a big impact.

Lots more stuff in our report that I can link you all to if you go to the next slide.

These are images from our outreach. We went to a transportation summit, a senior center, in language Spanish social community meet up and spoke with them, a food market and a farmers market. Those were our variety of outreach that we did, it was super fantastic.

And, again, all of the details in what we found, especially in terms of accessibility and materials is our marketing report that we did. You can try out the trip planner and reach out to me, Laura Loe, or Staci Sahoo, the director of mobility management. We wanted to include this photo here of all of our advisors. When we make decisions for Find A Ride these are all the folks who help make that decision. It is an exciting group in an exciting way to do this planning. Thanks toWSDOT, King County Montreat, Transit and Hopelink for their support. We are so happy to be part of this.

JEREMY JOHNSON-MILLER:

Alright, on to Mountain Rides which is located in Ketchum, Idaho. They are a smaller operation in the foothills, the mountains. As you can imagine it is hard to navigate during some times of the year.

They do also wanted to focus on some of those longer distance rides. They already had a route that would go to a large medical facility that was already in place, like I mentioned, but through this effort they started noticing other folks were jumping on the bus and going to work.

A lot of that fact-finding happened during this project where they discovered, "Oh, they be not everybody's going to medical appointments." Some were going to jobs.

They relied on word-of-mouth, newspaper ads. They never formally had a marketing campaign. They had a logo, website, social media but they had never really had a formalized campaign put together for them.

So, this was also a really good opportunity to develop those materials and have more tangible things that they could hand out and give out in the community.

They did have an existing Facebook page but they wanted help and assistance to enhance that and use it a little better. Something that we were a part of was, they give us access to their Facebook page so we could look at, and track some data, look at their usage and how they were using it, just so they could check that and see what was happening with their social media.

I did check the other day and they were up past 1800 followers. That is a pretty good statistic to look at for their Facebook page when they were not really using it very much when they started, but through this effort we were able to help them with that.

Through our efforts we were able to create 90 different radio ad placements, seven newspaper ad placements in various little towns that were in their area. We created 20 digital and social media graphics that they could use on their website or on social media.

They specifically wanted bus posters that could go on the bulkhead within the bus itself, and so I do have an image of that coming up soon.

But also standalone posters that they were able to either post in grocery stores, libraries, the medical facility, that could be posted around and advertise their services while.

They wanted 1000, they call them rack cards, 4" x 9" in size and so they could easily fit on different counters throughout the community, both in English and Spanish as well as 500 magnets, also in English and Spanish.

Here is that poster I was talking about. It is a bit bigger and wider. Again, just advertising their service, using the graphics that were provided. They had really good feedback and they said it was a really good experience for people to be able to see what the services offered. Again, they had some really good feedback on the graphics that were used.

Here is that visual of their rack card. It is a front and back. So, the front shows one of their vehicles, with a driver helping an individual getting into their van. And on the back it has a little bit more information on the services that they are providing, as well as their phone number and website that is available.

I also, since we were talking about boosting their social media, they were able to sort of build upon what we were helping them with. They actually created this on their own, I grab this from the social media. They started doing a faces of transit campaign and featuring riders and their experience on the bus.

Just one step further from what we were helping them with and so, I really do think that is giving them some good traction that they did not previously have.

On to Appalachian.

LYNNA MITCHELL:

Hello everyone, I am Lynna Mitchell, the grant writer for Appalachian agency for senior citizens but also serve as the project manager for Every Ride Counts Pilot Program. I have the QR code's if you would like to visit our website along with my contact information as well.

A little bit about Appalachian Agency, we were formed as a nonprofit, private in 1975 and we are one of 25 area agencies on aging in Virginia.

We serve the residents of McKennon, Dickinson, Russell and Tazewell counties in rural south West Virginia which I've highlighted in gold. We are in the mountain and rugged areas of Virginia which is totally different from our previous presenters in northern Virginia.

We also operate three divisions in Appalachian Agency, first, is aging services, second is Pace, the program of all-inclusive care for the elderly and finally, transportation, our public transit, which is Four County Transit. They are the provider for our county service area and they are the connection that binds our counties, towns and residents together.

Four County operates a deviated fixed route with specific stops and times but writers may also request pickup up to three quarters of a mile off the route.

They are currently operating fair free since COVID and stop at places such as low-income housing facilities, shopping centers, hospitals, pharmacies, grocery stores and any other types of these places that people need to go.

Writers can also call 48 hours in advance with pickup requests and now with our updated website, they can schedule rides that way too.

For County also provide some limited medical transportation as well as veterans'transportation and use of the medical transportation services available for individuals 60 years old and over who qualify.

The goals that we identified at the beginning of this project. First, we wanted to increase her ridership. Second, we wanted to educate the public on the benefits of using public transit. And finally, we wanted to engage the public via our social media channel, mostly on Facebook.

With our marketing materials we included a media mix of 20 newspaper ads, 366 radio spots, along with six social media ads. Additionally, we requested flyers, 500 flyers, that we could distribute at community events that we could post at spots in the community such as libraries, convenience stores, post offices, chambers of commerce, town halls, places like that that potential writers would frequent.

We also requested 1000 wallet cards that our drivers and staff could also distribute, along with 500 survey cards, to gather feedback and suggestions from our writers.

On the left of the screen is a sample of the newspaper ad. And in the middle is picture of one of their staff members distributing flyers at a community event, and then a wallet card on the right side.

These are also examples of our flyer on the left, and our survey card, which we did get good feedback from our writers on that, along with our 32nd radio script as well.

These are some outcomes I wanted to share. We coordinated the launch of the new and improved Four County website with the beginning of our social media campaign. The website was redesigned to be more user-friendly and interactive so a visitor could schedule rides and they could also view the routes.

As you can see, the social media campaign generated 35 new followers. We had 3607 ad link clicks, and we reached over 42,000 individuals.

Below that you can see that our website traffic peaks there when we launch the new website and we had over 16,000 visitors from March to April, so it was very effective.

Some feedback we received from writers, they would like to see some more extended hours into the evening, as well as some Saturday hours and some other options for medical transportation.

Our ridership did increase during this period. In February we saw an increase of 1319 riders. In March we saw a slight decrease of minus 134 but we picked back up in April 2000 407 six writer increase.

Overall we were very pleased that we could achieve all of our identified goals and we also received very positive comments on our marketing materials as well as our website so we are very appreciative to NADTC and to the (unknown name) for helping us achieve these goals, thank you.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

Thank you, Lynna. This is our contact information for the NADTC. We are going to change the format of this and get rid of the slides right now. We will be sending the slides to the participants. You will have access to them and we will be posting them on our website as well.

We have gotten, I think a couple of questions. So, there was a question about that was directed to NV Rides about the cost of rides to riders and to volunteers. Emily and Elena, I wonder if you could take that? I know you responded online but in case people have not read it.

EMILY BRALEY:

Yes, I'm happy to respond. We do not charge by the right. None of our programs to. A few programs have annual membership fees in order to request a ride but none of them are charge per ride. None of the volunteers are paid or reimbursed.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

There was a question also about how her are no cost rides funded? Since you do not charge, Emily, I wonder if you could start, take it there?

EMILY BRALEY:

Yes, Elena and I are almost the only paid staff in the network, a few others but most part of the programs are run by volunteers, the volunteers drive. We use funding to stretch across the whole region. As Elena mentioned, we all share software. We have the grant that funds the background checks will stop with that one source of funding we are able to support these 15 programs. Of course they have their own funding as well but we build a lot of capacity by being an umbrella organization.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

Lynna, you want to respond to that? I think some of your rights (indiscernible)

LYNNA MITCHELL:

Yes, (unknown name) is funded through the Department of rails and transportation. Is that the correct name? I think.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

Yes, that is the apartment that is basically the DOT in Virginia.

LYNNA MITCHELL:

Correct, they receive funding to operate Four , since we are the public transit provider for our County area. Previous to COVID we charged $0.25 a ride because ridership was down during COVID, and it was so important, we were transporting a lot of our clients to places to be vaccinated and to health appointments, medical appointments. They decided to get rid of the fears and were able to continue that I will stop it may change in the future but for now we are fair free.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

OK, great. Viewers through the department of transportation in essence, those are government funds and Emily, I think yours, it depends on who is the sponsoring organization. It might be government-funded or foundation, am I correct?

EMILY BRALEY:

Yes.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

Thank you. For NV Rides... We've got another question for you, Emily and Elena. What ways do you recognize volunteers?

EMILY BRALEY:

That is a great question. We have usually an annual celebration, each program will also have volunteer celebrations and we attend those. We tried to do paper plates of words like most miles, most hours, longest trip, that kind of thing.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

How does (unknown name) handle, a typical volunteer transportation program?

EMILY BRALEY:

The driver has their own insurance, the organization has on real insurance, everybody signs waivers.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

We have a question also for Hopelink, for Laura. Given the wide variety of transportation providers that you work with, have you noticed any differences in effectiveness with fixed route versus monorail versus ferrries, for example. A big question.

LAURA LOE:

A big question. Michelle did a soft launch of community testing with the Find A Ride and Every Ride Counts marketing materials last year. This year we are moving into a three county launch phase. We are still not at the radio spot, bus add level that some of the other folks here are. There is a lot we are learning from the other pilot projects and hope to kinda follow in those footsteps and take their lessons learned and apply them as we get ready to expand, kind of the reach of the program, but we do have people that sit on our advisory committee from the larger agencies.

The way we evaluate success, we do partner satisfaction surveys. We ask them to include questions about our program when they reach out to their communities. But how we evaluate the effectiveness of Find A Ride, since we are not the transit provider directly, does get very complicated. We can do a whole webinar on that (Laughs)

VIRGINIA DIZE:

No doubt about it. And for those, Emily I'm coming back to you, how do you qualify your volunteer drivers?

EMILY BRALEY:

We have a training, face-to-face, they all are background checked. They have to provide proof of driver's license and insurance that meet state standards will stop we make sure they are who they say they are.

We also have ongoing refreshers, how user software, mandatory reporting brochure from the state.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

We also have... Let me see... Let me make sure I have got this. How do you handle challenging writers? I think that is for everybody (Laughs) those that take advantage of the system, our volunteers or those who need more help that volunteers can give.

I'm sure that comes up in Northern Virginia a little bit since you require your writers to be able to get into the vehicle without assistance, pretty much. So, either referral services in particular that you use, I guess, is the question.

EMILY BRALEY:

You want us to take the question. I'm sure other people have some experiences, I can speak briefly...

VIRGINIA DIZE:

I was just saying if your program cannot provide the services, are there referral services you can use?

EMILY BRALEY:

Yes, we will refer them usually to a paid service. We keep a list of all insurance phone numbers and we will refer them to their insurance company. Sometimes insurance benefits will provide that assistance. We always use the verbiage, we never left, touch, transfer, that seems to communicate very well.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

There were lots of questions here about volunteer transportation. I do not mean to ignore them, I'm not going to, but the purpose of this webinar is really to talk a little bit about program promotion so, we will record all of these questions and make sure that you all who have asked questions, that all of the folks on the call get responses to questions that we are not getting to today.

And I wanted to just turn to our presenters for a minute and have you talk a little bit about how you engage with writers, as you develop your promotional material, (indiscernible) adults with disabilities and people with low income. How you engage with writers.

I will start with Lynna, could you start with this response?

LYNNA MITCHELL:

In addition to being the public transit provider, Four County transit also takes our congregate site. We have eight congregate sites that we operate, nutrition sites, and they transport our participants to and from those sites.

So, we have direct access to a great group that we could get feedback from. And we did get feedback from. And they are not shy (Laughs) to share their thoughts and their wishes. They have a big wish list.

We tried to take that and condense it down into our marketing materials in hopes that we could reach the right people. I think it is really important to know your riders and know your target audience. Sometimes they are the same and sometimes they may be different.

I think that is very important to know who you are trying to target with your marketing materials and to take that feedback and translated into something positive.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

And Laura? Anything to add to that?

LAURA LOE:

Yes. Our trip planner is still in development on a multiyear, multiphase roadmap and we have a 'nothing about us without us', not just our mobility for all framework that we work with in our inclusive planning but also in Washington state, there was a law passed by many of our partner organizations and advocates that represent people with disabilities, and in particular, that anything you do, you do alongside those communities from day one.

And so, we have honorariums where we give stipends to folks that participate in our advisory committee. We provided gift cards as part of that Every Ride Counts Campaign, when people engage with the QR code they were given the opportunity to get a grocery store gift card. That ended up so that the feedback we were getting during that very important phase really was from, excuse me, low income communities as well.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

Emily and Elena, anything to add to that in terms of involvement of riders or volunteers in developing your promotion materials?

EMILY BRALEY:

Yes, this project gives a really good chance to sit down with her volunteers. That is how we learned about their messaging that they preferred. "Don't put a picture of a car, have a picture of us having a great time drinking coffee." I learned from that. We asked and we did what they told us.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

I think one of the things it is clear from these projects is that everybody worked with a specific issue in their community and you saw that some of the images were used in different ways by different programs. So, some of the images were unique to a project and others were just simply, they were available on the Every Ride Counts site and were used.

Jeremy, did you want to add anything about the two programs that you worked with, Mountain Rides and Thrive Allen about how they engage with older adults and people with disabilities?

JEREMY JOHNSON-MILLER:

Because Thrive was so new, I do not have much to add there, but with Mountain Rides they did have a lot of good community connections. They did a lot of outreach to the medical facilities to understand what their needs were. They understood proper drop-off locations at the facility, just by having those conversations. They were able to network and understand the actual needs of those facilities.

As I mentioned before with Mountain Rides, they quickly understood that not everyone on what they called their medical route were all going to medical appointments. Some people were actually going to work. They were trying to understand that as well as well as trying to connect with the Spanish speaking population as well.

That was kind of their first request was to create materials in Spanish. That way they could do proper outreach to that particular community.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

Thank you. And I did want to ask about the... The feedback that you got from others on using Every Ride Counts materials. Whether or not you got any criticism. You know, I heard that a couple of the programs definitely had a lot of input from their advisors on what they wanted to see. But I wondered if you went into a slightly different direction than you thought in the first place? Or whether this project enabled you to identify some issues that you had been using, that you thought were successful in communication, that may be it coalesced a little bit, and what you learned, basically from this project? So, anyone can start.

LYNNA MITCHELL:

I will go ahead. I am not part of transit but I have learned a lot about public transit through this project and a couple of others.

One thing that I did see is the need for us to update our marketing materials and our website. It was very antiquated, our website was. It was totally un user friendly. I think this prompt us to make some good and needed changes to the website.

We could tell hand in hand with the social media sites that it did affect her visitors, which hopefully affected our ridership too. I guess what I'm saying is that sometimes it takes someone else or something else to prompt you to look with a critical eye at yourself. And that is what we did and I think we have a much improved total product now.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

Anyone else?

LAURA LOE:

I can speak. This is Laura Loe at Hopelink in Western Washington. I think what we have learned since we have developed our infographic in particular, is that while really dramatic and great our big, poster size is not as useful as just a good old 8.5 x 11" flyer that people or partner organizations can print on their own and put up in their communities, and things like that.

We did not focus as much on the basic material, and the infographic that looked great on 11 x 17" is too much information for a small flyer. But we've had to learn since then is to really hone in on what to cut out. And so, it is not just... You can take the largest oven skillet down and it is ready to go. So many of our community members are blind and low vision and our advisors are as well. There is a high degree of keeping things very simple, high contrast, large print and large font size and really pairing down information to the essentials.

That is a lesson we have continued to learn but, honestly, just like the last speaker said, because of this, it jumpstarted conversations that we would have had, maybe further down the road and allowed us to get ahead of where we would have been if we had not been part of this. So really, set us up for some great success in the future.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

Great, Emily, anything to add?

EMILY BRALEY:

I echo what the other presenter said. I think the real take away... You can see that from everybody is trifle brochures are kind of out right now and that grip cards, palm cards, that is what people find eye-catching and easy to use. I think it permanently moved me away from (unknown name) brochures and thinking about simple, high contrast, easy to pick up materials.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

Interestingly enough I would say we at NADTC have made that same observation we are trying to follow along with you guys. So, we appreciate what you all learned.

And there was another question about the budget that was used, or how did you decide how much money to spend of this project? And we had a limit at NADTC but it was a fairly generous event and there was negotiation between the local program and our contractor, Hatcher, in terms of what they could afford and what they could do.

I do not think anybody really got turned down for anything that they were trying to do but I think it raises the issue of cost is always a factor, and we do have a number of materials on the Every Ride Counts section of our website that includes guidance for creating a publicity campaign. So, there is a document that can walk you through that including identifying resources of publicity that you can take advantage of.

The other thing I would say is the report on these five programs is also available on the Every Ride Counts website, and we encourage you to take a look at it. It is a lovely report and it includes lots of information that we could not share during this one-hour long website.

Finally I would say that we will respond, there were a lot of questions... A lot of questions about volunteerism that are coming your way, Emily. And we do have a number of resources on our website at NADTC that are focused on volunteer transportation, so, to take a look at those as well.

We will follow-up on the questions. The recording of this webinar will be on our... It will be sent to you all. You all will have access to it and we will post it on our YouTube channel. And finally, I think Meredith is posting an evaluation. We ask you to please click on that evaluation and let us know how we did. If you have got any more questions, just send them our way.

Jeremy, I'm going to turn to you for last word. (Laughs)

JEREMY JOHNSON-MILLER:

(Laughs) thank you so much to all of the pilot sites. I think we all learned a lot. I like that each of you included that you learned along the way. We did not mention a lot but we did work with consultant Hatcher who helped guide this project along and they were able to give industry expert advice on what types of interiors were being used in the industry and how to go about that.

We gave them the ideas and they just ran away with it and produce the materials alongside of us. So, big shout out to Hatcher. Thank you all for joining and thank you, again, to the pilots.

VIRGINIA DIZE:

Yes. I cannot thank you all enough. You all have been just absolutely wonderful partners. We really, truly appreciate the great work that you all have done and we will be doing, continuing to do more work on our Every Ride Counts site, so stay tuned. You will hear about that via our website and our e-news.

If you're not getting it now, please sign up for it. And with that, we are out of time so, I will say, "Sayonara." Have a wonderful afternoon and thank you, again, to our great speakers. We appreciate it. Bye Bye.

(End of webinar)