

## **BRIDGES & BEYOND PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

The guidelines of the Bridges & Beyond Program are outlined below. Please review these carefully so you understand the services the program is able to offer and also the expectations it has of clients.

### **General**

- The ability of the Bridges & Beyond program to provide service at any given time is always subject to the availability of an appropriate volunteer and/or funding. Bridges & Beyond reserves the right to deny a request for service at any time.
- The services of Bridges & Beyond volunteers are non-medical in nature. Therefore, volunteers will not handle medication, lift a client or assist with personal care.
- Bridges & Beyond understands the need for social and recreational outings and tries to provide rides for these events whenever possible. However, when scheduling volunteer drivers, medical appointments will receive priority.

### **Transportation**

- Bridges & Beyond drivers may transport clients out of Rutland County only if they are seeking medical treatment or consultation at a hospital or affiliated medical office. They are unable to transport clients out of Rutland County for ongoing medical treatments or for non-medical reasons.
- Bridges & Beyond drivers are unable to transport minors. In extenuating circumstances, a child 12 or older may be transported if accompanied by an adult, assuming the child can be properly restrained in a safety belt system (not a child car seat or booster seat).
- All Bridges & Beyond volunteers and clients are required to wear a federally approved safety belt while in a moving vehicle. If a seat belt extender will be needed, the client must notify Bridges & Beyond staff in advance and they will try to arrange for one. Refusal or inability to wear a safety belt while riding with a Bridges & Beyond volunteer may result in inability to transport.
- Bridges & Beyond discourages “tips” to your volunteer driver; however, donations to the Bridges & Beyond program are welcomed, appreciated and help support the continued availability of this FREE service. Donations are tax deductible and may be mailed to Bridges & Beyond, RRMC Social Work Department; 160 Allen St.; Rutland, VT 05701, or you can ask your driver to give them to us on your behalf.
- As demand for our services continues to increase, there may be times when we must limit the number of rides and/or miles traveled per individual. For example, if you need to go to an appointment five days a week, it is possible we may ask you to arrange other means of transportation for two of those days and we will try to provide for the other three.
- Bridges & Beyond staff will notify you if and when a volunteer driver has been assigned for a particular trip. You cannot assume a driver is available until you receive confirmation from Bridges & Beyond staff. If we must notify you by voice message, we will ask you to call us back to confirm that you received the message and that the ride is still needed.
- Bridges & Beyond volunteer drivers utilize their own vehicles to provide service. We ask that you respect them by refraining from eating, smoking, etc. while in their vehicles.

### Expectations of Clients

- Clients seeking services from Bridges & Beyond are expected to give an accurate account of their needs and to limit their requests to a reasonable number, frequency, and time frame. Bridges & Beyond will be unable to continue to provide services if a client knowingly and repeatedly misrepresents his or her need, destination, situation, or time involved.
- If a scheduled trip or visit with a Bridges & Beyond volunteer needs to be canceled, the client must contact the Bridges & Beyond office as soon as possible. We understand that there are times when circumstances exist beyond one's control; however, repeated instances of cancellations without adequate notice or “no-shows” with no evidence of effort to cancel may result in denial of future requests for service.
- If a client has received a ride to a medical appointment from a Bridges & Beyond volunteer and that appointment either takes much longer than expected or additional medical interventions are unexpectedly needed, the client should make every effort to contact the volunteer driver or the Bridges & Beyond office. Similarly, repeated instances of not being ready when the volunteer arrives and/or making the volunteer wait for extended periods may result in denial of future requests for service. Volunteer schedules are often very tight without a lot of flexibility, so a significant delay or change for one person will have an effect on the rest of the schedule.
- Clients are asked to give as much notice as possible when requesting services from a Bridges & Beyond volunteer. While there is never a guarantee that service will be provided, it is much more likely that a request can be met if we have at least several days notice. Last minute requests are discouraged and may not be filled.
- Requests for service from the Bridges & Beyond program must be made through the Bridges & Beyond office at 747-3710. Clients should not call a volunteer directly unless specifically told to do so by the volunteer or Bridges & Beyond program staff. If you are given the volunteer's phone number for the purpose of arranging a return pick up from an appointment, that number should be used **for that instance only**. Repeated instances of “unauthorized” calls directly to a volunteer may result in denial of future requests for service.
- Clients will not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while receiving services from a Bridges & Beyond volunteer. If a client is found to be under the influence of one or more of these substances, or transporting an open container of alcohol or illegal substance, current service as well as future requests for service will be denied.
- Just as we require our volunteers to treat those they assist with courtesy and respect, we expect they will be treated this way in return. Rude, disrespectful, verbally or physically abusive behavior toward a volunteer or Bridges & Beyond staff may result in denial of future requests for service.

***Thank you for reviewing and following these guidelines. If you have any questions, please call us at 747-3710.***