



Regional Transportation Authority

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RTA's reimbursement program supports nearly 1.5 million in miles logged to support volunteer transportation for homebound

The award-winning Pima Council on Aging's Neighbors Care Alliance program has logged 1,487,850 miles of transportation for the homebound since January 2007 with funding support provided by the Regional Transportation Authority.

The funding, designated under the RTA's \$2.1 billion, 20-year regional transportation plan, reimburses mileage expenses for volunteer drivers who provide rides or errands for homebound individuals. Approved by voters in May 2006, the plan designates funding for the Alliance from the transit element category of "Special Needs for Elderly and Disabled Citizens."

The Neighbors Care Alliance, managed by PCOA since 2003, is a local network of more than 21 neighborhood programs in 140 neighborhoods, faith communities and organizations. Neighbors Care Alliance programs are developed by local residents to help homebound neighbors by providing basic necessities of daily living, including transportation and home-based supports, so that neighbors can continue to live safely at home and maintain their independence for as long as possible. In the past year, NCA programs reported that nearly 2,000 seniors were served by 1,069 volunteers, who provide five to 10 services each week.

Last year, Pima Council on Aging's NCA volunteers donated 66,000 hours of service, according to Jeannie Maldonado, PCOA Community Relations Director. "The economic impact of volunteer services is truly remarkable and measurable, too," she said. "Calculated on the national hourly rate of \$21.36, our NCA volunteers contribute \$1,409,000 in value to Pima County's many communities."

Later this month, the Corporation for National and Community Service will observe the second annual Senior Corps Week during the week of Sept. 19-23 to raise awareness and to thank community partners and local volunteers. Many of PCOA's NCA volunteers are Retired and Senior Volunteer Program volunteers (RSVP/Senior Corps).

"Senior Corps Week will shine a spotlight on the many ways that local volunteers and community partners contribute to the Corporation's Senior Corps programs like the Neighbors Care Alliance," said Cecilia Salaz, PCOA's new manager of Volunteer Services. "We couldn't provide these rides without the volunteerism that is generated by this voter-approved RTA program. The RTA's modest investment for mileage reimbursement immensely improves transit for older adults in our region. Thank you Pima County voters."

The Regional Transportation Authority is the fiscal manager of the \$2.1 billion regional transportation plan approved by Pima County voters on May 16, 2006. The RTA Board is comprised of elected representatives from the cities of Tucson and South Tucson, Pima County, the towns of Marana, Oro Valley and Sahuarita, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the Tohono O'odham Nation. A representative of the Arizona State Transportation Board also serves on the board. For more information about the RTA plan, visit www.RTAmobility.com or call (520) 770-9410.