

Measuring Companionship- Transportation Service Activities

Sample Survey for RSVP Projects with Supporting Materials

About these Materials

This sample survey was developed for RSVP projects that provide companionship/ transportation services to help homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities live independently. The survey measures Healthy Futures performance measure outcome **H9**, increased social ties/perceived social support. The first two questions in the survey are specifically designed to measure outcome H9 and should not be removed or changed if you want to use the survey to respond to the H9 outcome.

This survey and supporting materials are part of the tutorial, [Measuring Companionship-Transportation Activities: RSVP Project Example](#), available at the National Service Knowledge Network's [Online Learning Center](#). You are encouraged to review the tutorial at the Online Learning Center to gain a more complete understanding of the materials presented in this packet.

The tutorial follows an RSVP project as they determine whether Healthy Futures performance measures H8 and H9 are appropriate for their activities. Project staff considers whether to use this survey and discuss the best way to manage data collection.

If your RSVP volunteers provide this type of activity, this survey may be appropriate for you.

This packet includes:

- [Companionship-Transportation Survey Sample](#) (page 1)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the survey (page 2)
- [Performance Measure Checklist, H9 Example](#) (page 5)
- [Work Plan Sample](#) (page 7)
- [How to Analyze the Survey Data](#) (page 8)

Companionship-Transportation Survey (Sample)

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

INDEPENDENT LIVING PERFORMANCE MEASURE SURVEY

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We would like to know how the RSVP Volunteer who has been assisting you has affected your life.

All information will be kept confidential; please do not disclose your name. You may choose not to answer questions.

Because I have a RSVP volunteer...	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Not applicable
1) ... I feel less lonely.					
2) ... I feel I have close ties to more people.					
3) ... I can remain living in my own home.					
4) ... I am able to get to medical appointments.					
5) ... I am able to get to the grocery store					
6) ... I am able to take care of other necessary errands/appointments.					
7) Overall, I am satisfied with my RSVP volunteer.					
8) Overall, the RSVP has met my expectations.					

Feel free to comment on your experience on the back of this page.

Frequently Asked Questions: Companionship – Transportation Survey Sample

Who should receive the survey?

Clients who receive services which allow them to live independently - specifically transportation and companionship services - may receive this survey. Decide in advance the minimum amount of service clients should receive before being included in the survey (e.g., once a week for at least 16 weeks). These criteria should be a part of your work plan.

Can I add questions to the Companionship-Transportation Survey?

Yes, you can add questions to the survey. Additional questions may collect information about other results experienced by the client or information that will help you improve the service.

What are the options for conducting the surveys?

The survey can be given to the client in any of the following ways:

- In person, by handing it to them to fill out;
- In person or over the telephone, by reading it to them and taking down their answers on paper or on a computer using an electronic version of the survey; or
- Sending it to them through the mail

Regardless of how you conduct the survey, surveys must be kept confidential. This means there are no names on the completed surveys, completed surveys are returned in a sealed envelope, and they are stored in a safe place.

How do I collect the information from the volunteer stations? Who can help?

When considering the agency-wide performance measures, first think about the capacity of the volunteer stations where you place volunteers and your working relationship with those volunteer stations. Responsive stations are your best partners in distributing and collecting the surveys.

RSVP volunteers may be able to serve as “survey helpers” by distributing the survey to clients. A brief orientation offered by the volunteer station or RSVP staff will help RSVP volunteers introduce the survey and respond to clients’ questions.

How do I know if I have met the H9 outcome?

There are two questions on the survey that respond to the H9 outcome (clients report having increased social ties and/or perceived social support):

Question 1) *Because I have a RSVP volunteer I feel less lonely.*

Question 2) *Because I have a RSVP volunteer I feel I have close ties to more people.*

You should not remove or change these two questions if you want to use the survey to respond to the H9 outcome. In your work plan, you determine your target for achieving the outcome by deciding how many of the clients eligible to be surveyed will answer positively (“somewhat agree” or “strongly agree”) to at least one of the two questions. (For more information on reporting on the outcome, see [How to Analyze the Survey Data](#) on page 8).

What should I do with information from the other questions?

Because I have a RSVP volunteer...	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Not applicable
1. ... I feel less lonely.					
2. ... I feel I have close ties to more people.					
3. ... I can remain living in my own home.					
4. ... I am able to get to medical appointments.					
5. ... I am able to get to the grocery store					
6. ... I am able to take care of other necessary errands/appointments.					
7. Overall, I am satisfied with my RSVP volunteer.					
8. Overall, the RSVP has met my expectations.					

Results for all these questions can be reported to stakeholder groups (advisory board, volunteer stations, volunteers) and contribute to greater understanding of client benefits and needs. This information can serve as a springboard for discussion about how to improve services and better fulfill unmet needs of clients. High satisfaction with volunteers and the program can also be used to attract new volunteers and funders. Disagreement with the statements provides an opportunity to reassess your services.

Question 3) *Because I have a RSVP volunteer, I can remain living in my own home.* Agreement with this statement demonstrates that the service contributes to client independence. If a large number of clients disagree, consider if there are gaps in the services or unmet client needs. Your project and partners might be able to identify additional needs and offer services or referrals.

Question 4) *Because I have a RSVP volunteer, I am able to get to medical appointments.* This statement along with statement numbers 5 and 6 below ask the clients to consider specific activities associated with transportation services. If you are not getting agreement, consider whether transportation services are frequent enough. Consider if service changes are necessary or if you need to clarify what clients can expect.

Question 5) *Because I have a RSVP volunteer, I am able to get to the grocery store.* Like questions 4 and 6, the client is asked about a specific transportation activity, grocery shopping. However, if this or any of the statements reflect services your project **does not** provide, you should expect to see “not applicable”. Clients might also simply disagree with the statement.

Question 6) *Because I have a RSVP volunteer, I am able to take care of other necessary errands/appointments.* Like questions 4 and 5, the client is asked about a specific transportation activity, running errands or going to other appointment. Client disagreement may indicate a desire for more or different transportation services. Consider comments as you think about the service changes or expansions.

Question 7) *Overall, I am satisfied with my RSVP volunteer* focuses on client satisfaction with the **RSVP volunteer**. If many clients disagree with this statement, examine the volunteers' performance and relationships with clients. Perhaps volunteers are chronically late or unable to handle multiple client demands. It may be that additional training is needed to ensure that volunteers are able to do their best work and know about other resources to offer. Check the comments for additional information.

Question 8) *Overall, the RSVP program has met my expectations* focuses on client satisfaction with the **RSVP project** as understood by the client. Disagreement with this statement may indicate a problem with the service or a misunderstanding of what the companionship-transportation service can or cannot do. Look at the comments on those surveys where there is disagreement for any clarification.

In addition to the item-by-item suggestions above, you can look for patterns across the set of questions. Are there questions that score particularly low compared to the others? If so, these questions represent areas for further investigation. The comments can be reviewed for information pertaining to these items. Low scores for particular items may represent unmet needs that the program can address internally or via external referrals.

What should I do with any comments?

Comments can be an excellent way to gather additional information and find out what's on clients' minds. Comments can shed additional light on the responses to other questions, perhaps indicating why a client disagreed with some statements. Likewise, comments may pinpoint why the client agreed with the statements, such as aspects of the service that are particularly important. This information can help you determine modifications to the service activity or other appropriate responses. Comments can also highlight outstanding qualities of service that you can quote in reports or volunteer recruitment materials.

Does H9 replace aging in place?

For many years I have used aging in place as my most important outcome ("Because of the RSVP volunteer I can remain living in my home"). Can the outcome "increased social ties and/or perceived social support" replace it?

The "Increased social ties and/or perceived social support" can replace the aging in place outcome. The H9 outcome supports the aging in place outcome as twenty years of medical research has established a strong connection between social ties and/or perceived social support and positive mental and physical health outcomes. Put simply, researchers believe that positive social ties and feeling that support is available can help individuals remain physically and mentally healthy. Contact with RSVP volunteers providing companionship and transportation services can address both the physical and social connections (mental) needed for good health. The healthier people are, the more likely they are to remain living in their own homes.

Performance Measure Checklist (H9 Example)

Below is an optional checklist to help you decide if performance measure H9 is appropriate for your project, and if the [sample client survey](#) on page 1 will work for you.

Go through this checklist in any order you want – just make sure to address each item. For each item, decide if it is complete (Check “yes, done”), or needs work (Check “needs work”).

Go back and review the items that need work and see what you can do to address the issue.¹

Check whether each item is “done” or “needs work”	yes, done	needs work
<p>1. Start with the outcome. Give it a read.</p> <p>OUTCOME: H9-Number of homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities who reported having <u>increased social ties/perceived social support</u>.</p> <p>CNCS defines social ties/perceived social support as “relationships with other people and/or the belief that these people will offer (or have offered) effective help during times of need”.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your current outcome the same or different than outcome H9? Does the outcome in your current work plan match the H9 outcome (increased social ties/perceived social support)? 		
<p>2. Review the community need in relation to your service activity.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there needs or deficiencies in your community that could be effectively addressed by the service activity? Is that clearly stated in the community need statement? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the community need in your current work plan addressed by your service activity? 		
<p>3. Consider if your service activity will contribute to the outcome H9</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the H9 outcome seem appropriate given the service provided by RSVP volunteers? That is, is it reasonable to expect that the people who receive your service will feel less lonely or feel they have close ties to more people because of the RSVP volunteer? 		

¹ The tutorial, [Measuring Companionship-Transportation Activities: RSVP Project Example](#), includes RSVP project staff discussing the items on this checklist.

Performance Measure Checklist, continued

Check whether each item is “done” or “needs work”	yes, done	needs work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the service contribute in a meaningful way to the H9 outcome? Is the level of effort of the volunteers sufficient in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequency (how often it occurs, e.g., 5 days a week)? ○ Duration (for how long it occurs, e.g., 9 months)? ○ Intensity (how much occurs. e.g., 10 minutes a visit)? 		
4. Take a close look at the survey to ensure that it is appropriate		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the survey questions seem appropriate given your service activity? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the survey seem appropriate for your service clients? Can they understand it and fill it out? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you believe the items on survey are addressed directly by your service activity? 		
5. Finally, check your ability to manage the data collection for this outcome.		
Volunteer Station		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a working relationship with your volunteer stations? That is, do they usually communicate and respond in a timely way? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a MOU which spells out performance measurement assistance needs? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will they be able to manage the distribution of the survey? Is there an opportunity to get it to the clients? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will stations be able to collect the surveys? Would they be able to prepare RSVP volunteers as “survey helpers” to collect the surveys? 		
Grantee		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have the staff time and/or stakeholder support in place to provide support to the collection, and aggregate and report the data? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you collect and report on the results within one year? 		

Better Times RSVP Work Plan (Sample)

Companionship-Transportation Activity

Focus Area: Healthy Futures **Objective:** Aging in Place **Stations:** 10 **RSVP Volunteers:** 300

Community Need: According to the U.S. Census (2010), at least 1,300 seniors living alone in Trimen have incomes at or below the poverty level. A 2009 study commissioned by the Amber County Agency on Aging found that one out of every four seniors in the region has experienced anxiety or depression in the last year and one in five has some long-term physical limitation that hinders their ability to care for themselves.

For seniors isolated in their homes, the lack of companionship can contribute to a wide variety of problems that can hasten dependency and lead to institutionalization. Regular supportive visits from caring peers can help decrease feelings of isolation.

In addition, many elderly are no longer able to drive and limited public transportation services further isolate seniors. By providing regular transportation services, the elderly can get to medical appointments and other events and have the peace of mind to know support is available to them.

Medical research also indicates that positive social ties and feeling that support is available can help individuals stay and continue to remain physically and mentally healthy (Holt-Lunstad J, Smith TB, Layton JB (2010) Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-analytic Review).

The healthier people are, the more likely they are to remain living in their own homes.

Service Activity: 300 Better Times RSVP volunteers will provide 750 low income elderly individuals living alone with companionship and transportation services. RSVP volunteers will meet with each client at least once a week for at least 16 weeks. RSVP will provide clients with companionship including conversation/checking in, simple meal preparation, grooming, light housekeeping and pet care. RSVP volunteers will also transport these same clients to medical appointments, to obtain prescription medication and/or other errands.

Performance Measure Output (H8): Number of homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving food, transportation, or other services that allow them to live independently.

Target: 750

Instrument: Database

Instrument Description: The *Client Home Visit and Transportation Log* is completed daily by RSVP volunteers and entered into the database on a monthly basis by the Project Director.

Performance Measure Outcome (H9): Number of homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities who reported having increased social ties/perceived social support.

Target: 315²

Instrument: Survey

Instrument Description: *Companionship-Transportation Survey* will be administered once a year to clients who have received companionship-transportation services once a week for at least 16 weeks.

² How did Better Times RSVP get this number? They know that all 750 clients are eligible to be surveyed (have at least 16 weeks of service). They hope to get back at least 60% of the surveys or 450 completed surveys. Of the 450 anticipated returned surveys, they hope to see seventy percent (70%) or around 315 meet the outcome.

How to Analyze the Survey Data

Companionship-Transportation Survey Sample

You can develop a simple spreadsheet to summarize your data and report to stakeholders. Below is another easy way to summarize the information for the H9 outcome: clients report having increased social ties and/or perceived social support. You will need the completed Companionship-Transportation Surveys, a tally sheet, a calculator and a pencil.

Steps

1. Gather all of the Companionship-Transportation surveys into a pile.
2. Develop a tally sheet like this one.

Number of eligible respondents (i.e. 16 weeks or more of service): ____ Number of respondents: ____	Number that somewhat agree or strongly agree
Q1 ... I feel less lonely.	
Q2 ...I feel I have close ties to more people.	
Both Q1 and Q2	

3. Note the number of eligible clients that were offered a survey. For Better Times RSVP, the project described in the [sample work plan](#) (page 7), 750 clients that receive at least 16 weeks of service were offered a survey. Then, count up actual surveys received and note that number. Better Times RSVP received 450 completed surveys.

Number of eligible respondents (i.e. 16 weeks or more of service): 750 Number of respondents: 450	Number that somewhat agree or strongly agree
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4. Go through the pile and focus on just two statements in each survey: Question 1 (...I feel less lonely) and Question 2 (...I feel I have close ties to more people). For each survey, you should put only one hash mark (or leave blank) on the tally sheet.

- If “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” is marked for **both** Q1 and Q2, put a hash mark in “both Q1 and Q2”.
- If “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” is marked for Q1 (only), put a hash mark in that row.

- If “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” is marked for Q2 (only), put a hash mark in that row
- Do not put anything if the respondent checks “not applicable”, “somewhat disagree”, “strongly disagree” or leaves the question blank.

Number of eligible respondents (i.e. 16 weeks or more of service): <u>750</u> Number of respondents: <u>450</u>	Number that somewhat agree or strongly agree
Q1 ... I feel less lonely.	 etc.
Q2 ...I feel I have close ties to more people.	 etc.
Both Q1 and Q2	etc.

5. Count up the totals and note the numbers. Here’s what Better Times RSVP found:

- Q1...I feel less lonely=150 agree responses (somewhat or strongly)
- Q2...I feel I have close ties to more people=100 agree responses (somewhat or strongly)
- Both Q1 and Q2=125 agree responses (somewhat or strongly)
- Total=375 agree responses (somewhat or strongly)

Number of eligible respondents (i.e. 16 weeks or more of service): <u>750</u> Number of respondents: <u>450</u>	Number that somewhat agree or strongly agree
Q1 ... I feel less lonely.	150
Q2 ...I feel I have close ties to more people.	100
Both Q1 andQ2	125
Total	375

6. Report on the H9 outcome in eGrants using your progress report. Better Times RSVP can report that **375** out of the 450 (83%) surveyed clients report having increased social ties and/or perceived social support. In the progress report, they would simply write the number, “375”, as in “375 homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities report having increased social ties and/or perceived social support”.

7. Other reports. In addition to the progress report, think about other reporting opportunities where you might share the information in more detail. For instance, “750 clients received companionship and transportation services from Better Times RSVP volunteers. Of the 450 clients who completed surveys...

- Eighty-three percent (83% or 375) of the clients completing a survey report having increased social ties and/or perceived social support. Of that group of 375 clients:
 - Forty percent (40%) agreed that because of the RSVP volunteer, they feel less lonely.
 - Twenty-seven percent (27 %) agreed that because of the RSVP volunteer, they have close ties to more people.

Thirty-three percent (33 %) agreed that because of the RSVP volunteer, they feel less lonely AND also feel that they have close ties to more people.