

How EZ Ride doubled rides for seniors with Lyft

Through its relationship with Lyft, EZ Ride transformed access to seniors' basic needs, including medical appointments, dialysis, pharmacies, vaccines, grocery stores, and social activities.

EZ Ride demonstrates the power of "easy."

As the first TMA in New Jersey, EZ Ride proudly manages a multitude of transportation programs for nonprofits, businesses, and municipal, county, and state agencies.

Since 1983, EZ Ride's mission has been to implement innovative transportation programs and services, enhancing the quality of life, regional mobility, and economic opportunity for people and businesses alike. Their impressive footprint includes operating their own fleet of vehicles, which provided more than 700,000 trips each year (pre-pandemic).

"Whether it's the first mile or the last mile for people, EZ Ride bridges the transportation gap in many communities," said Krishna Murthy, President and CEO at EZ Ride.

Partnering with several hundred nonprofit, governmental, and private entities, EZ Ride has established itself as a one-stop shop for all transportation needs.

The challenge

Shuttles to public transit, carpools and vanpools to work, bike and pedestrian programs: EZ Ride has it all.

Even with all those offerings, it wasn't long before EZ Ride recognized that more could be done for their seniors.

SUMMARY



Industry

Nonprofit



Challenge

EZ Ride, the first Transportation Management Association (TMA) in New Jersey providing more than 700,000 passenger trips (pre-pandemic) each year, needed to scale up its transportation solution to meet the needs of its senior riders.



Solution

EZ Ride implemented Lyft Concierge to facilitate access to on-demand rides, and enhance the mobility of seniors throughout New Jersey.



Impact

- Doubled ridership in a single fiscal year
- Currently providing over 5,000 rides per month with minimal no-show rate
- Improved access to medical appointments, dialysis, pharmacies, vaccines, grocery, and social activities
- Expanded service to all 21 counties in New Jersey

"We've had a big focus on seniors, because we want to provide a service that lets them stay connected," said Murthy.

EZ Ride created a senior transportation program, "Community Cars," designed to offer mobility, independence, and access to life's most basic needs. Initially, they operated their own fleet of sedans and minivans with volunteer drivers in the area. It was a success, but there were a few bumps along the way.

"We [wanted to] create a community of volunteers to help support all the people's needs in our area," said Murthy. "The concept was good, but we didn't have enough volunteers and vehicles to meet the demand," he added.

But Murthy was optimistic. As seniors found value in the service, it became a transportation lifeline. And as a result, EZ Ride knew they needed to pivot quickly in order to scale.

"We've been able to work with a diverse group of public, private, and nonprofit entities who need transportation and don't have the resources. [Lyft] offers a wonderful solution to our challenge to meet their transportation needs."

—**Krishna Murthy, President and CEO at EZ Ride**

The opportunity

Research shows that an estimated 10.8 million older adults in the United States rarely or never drive. Among nondrivers, 25% were classified as transportation disadvantaged, representing 2.3 million individuals. These statistics highlight a large population for which access to transportation is not readily available.

"[Seniors] were dependent on family and friends to get around until we started helping them, and many of them needed rides to medical appointments, dialysis, and food shopping," said Murthy.

Transportation, a key determinant of health, is a conduit for accessing broader social needs. Consequently, experiencing transportation barriers can often exacerbate food insecurity, missed medical care, social isolation and loneliness, and diminished quality of life.

But with such a large population to reach, and such an ambitious goal to improve the lives of seniors, EZ Ride needed help to be more effective.

The solution

In 2017, EZ Ride turned to Lyft to facilitate access to on-demand transportation through a new statewide offering called EZ Ryde4Life—a membership program open to adults 18 years and older.

EZ Ride implemented Lyft Concierge, a best-in-class transportation solution, into its call center workflow. EZ Ride was no longer managing a massive undertaking alone, allowing Lyft to take the wheel instead.



Top benefits include



Improving quality of life

With EZ Ryde4Life and Lyft, seniors feel empowered to maintain an active lifestyle. They're able to hang onto their independence, socialize with their friends, engage with their community, and improve their overall quality of life.

"When seniors have access to transportation, they feel a lot more independent, and in charge of their own decision. It's a godsend to them because they really look at it as a great way to get out."

—**Krishna Murthy, President and CEO at EZ Ride**



Reporting made easy

Lyft Concierge allows EZ Ride to easily access and track monthly reporting of their programs, all in one dashboard.

"We are big on data and there are a number of reports we have to turn out for different agencies. Through Lyft, EZ Ride can easily access the organization's ride history and create customized reports for any client."

—**Avnish Gupta, COO and General Counsel at EZ Ride**

"We don't have to own vehicles and recruit volunteer drivers to provide transportation options to our communities. We can partner with Lyft to provide the service wherever it's needed," said Avnish Gupta, COO and General Counsel at EZ Ride.

With Lyft, EZ Ride reached a new demographic, low-income riders, along with more nonprofit organizations, both of which helped increase ridership and broaden the scope of the program.

Once EZ Ride sets up a client, coordinators are able to request rides for members—even if they don't have a smartphone or the Lyft app.

For those with technical limitations, or seniors who would rather talk to a human being (especially when personal information is exchanged), Lyft Concierge provided the perfect opportunity to meet members at their comfort level.

Additionally, EZ Ride values how rides through the Lyft network are on-demand and available across a large geographical area. The flexibility and coverage enabled EZ Ride to provide access to reliable transport to and from seniors' medical appointments, their most common request, accounting for 50% of all rides.

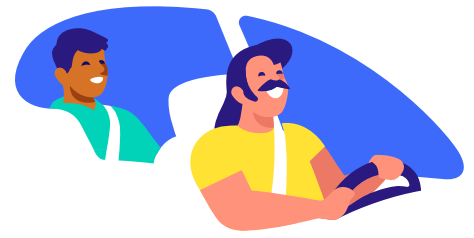
"We serve the entire state of New Jersey, so a major benefit with Lyft is the statewide reach," said Gupta. "Some of these people go into New York City or Pennsylvania for their medical trips. So we also go into these neighboring states and bring people back."

And access to reliable rides became more imperative during COVID-19. Shuttles were paused, and EZ Ryde4Life began to gain strong traction. Communities like Montclair Township—where the municipality offers rides for all seniors 55 and older, regardless of destination—switched to EZ Ryde4Life due to a need for single-occupancy vehicles and versatility.

"We gradually introduced them to this program, and now they are so hooked that they don't want to go back to shuttles," said Gupta. "They adapted the whole program because it's scalable.... and with the shuttles, you can only be in one place, at one time," added Gupta.

"We used to do 15,000 rides per year before the pandemic. Now we're doing 5,000 rides a month, which means we will reach about 60,000 rides in a year," said Gupta. "We have more people talking about it, so clearly this program is growing."

As more counties and organizations partner with EZ Ride, they too discovered the additional benefits of using Lyft to solve transportation challenges. No-shows are mitigated because rides are requested on-demand and monitored in real-time. Seniors are satisfied with the friendly and seamless call center experience. And most importantly, members are in control of their transportation and empowered to remain active later in life.



Top benefits include

Rides for everyone

Lack of technology access shouldn't get in the way of a ride. Coordinators can help facilitate on-demand Lyft ride requests—whether or not riders have the app.

"The average age of our riders is close to 80. They're typically challenged by technology, and for that reason they feel comfortable coming to us."

—Kinga Skora, Deputy Director of Marketing and Sales at EZ Ride

Five-star service

At Lyft Healthcare, we're committed to supporting organizations every step of the way. Our team of experts is invested in helping people lead healthier lives with the world's best transportation.

"The wonderful people and account managers have been really supportive. If we need something, we get a response. That's the main reason why our partnership with Lyft is successful."

—Avnish Gupta, COO and General Counsel at EZ Ride

Looking ahead

EZ Ride is eager to continue building on the success of their programs, and propel EZ Ryde4Life with Lyft.

"In a nutshell, we have been evolving, keeping pace with the changing needs of our societies and our communities, where we live and work," said Gupta. "Our partnership with Lyft may not be the best answer for every solution, but it is a big solution for lots of questions that we get. And we try to tell people at the right time, here is a program which can meet your needs. That's what EZ Ride is all about."