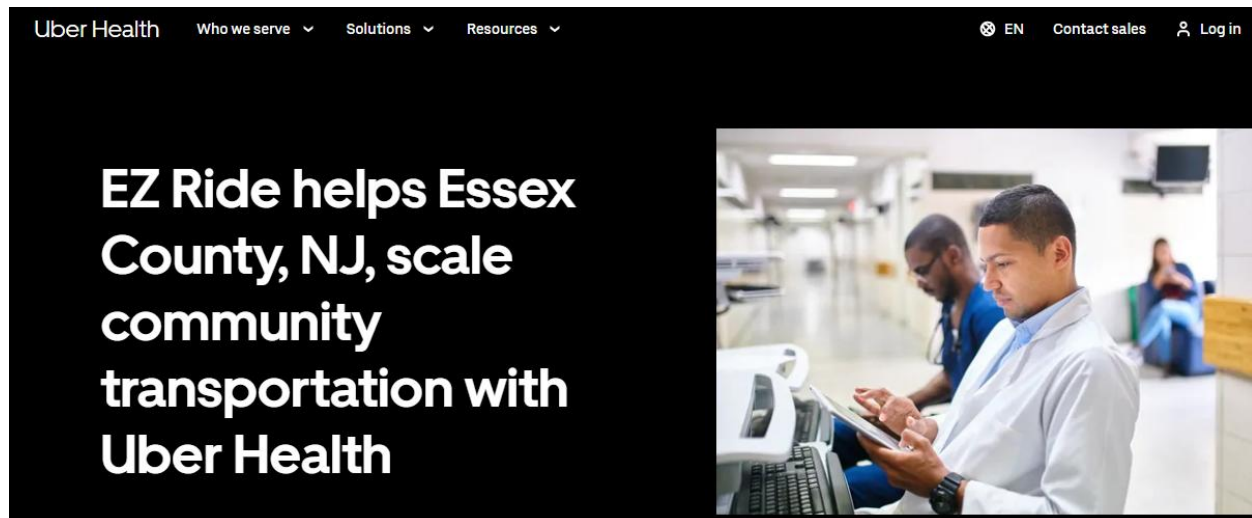




EZ Ride is a nonprofit public-private partnership that partners with businesses and government agencies to help people overcome transportation challenges. Its mission is to “remove the transportation barrier, not just lower it, for people who face transportation challenges in their everyday lives,” says Avnish Gupta, Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel at EZ Ride.

The organization partners with counties, municipalities, and nonprofits to design and operate transportation programs for seniors, people with disabilities, low-income residents, and others without access to a personal vehicle. For many riders, a trip is more than just transportation; it means getting to a doctor’s appointment, picking up groceries, or staying connected to the community.

EZ Ride, by the numbers

140K	95%	33%
rides provided in 2025	of rides were with Uber (Q4 2025)	reduction in cost per ride in 2025 (average of \$18 vs \$27)

Accessible transportation matters

For counties and human services agencies, removing transportation barriers is not just about mobility – it directly impacts public health, housing stability, and overall community well-being. “Reliable access to transportation often determines whether someone can receive medical care, maintain employment, or get to the grocery store,” says Gupta. “When transportation is unavailable, missed appointments, social isolation, and economic instability become far more likely.” For seniors and people with chronic conditions, even one missed trip can ripple into missed care and added stress for families and caregivers.

A modern transportation network company leveraging on-demand rides with Uber Health

In 2008, EZ Ride launched a volunteer driver program using a small fleet of grant-funded vehicles to provide low-cost rides for older adults. “Our approach for many years was to do it ourselves,” Gupta explains. “But soon the demand for rides outpaced what we could provide.” To meet the growing demand, EZ Ride transitioned in 2017 to a transportation network company (TNC)-based program. By working with Uber and other on-demand platforms, EZ Ride was able to scale its services quickly without recruiting drivers or investing in additional vehicles.

Helping Essex County expand community transportation

One of EZ Ride’s key customers is the Essex County Community Transportation System, which provides free transportation to seniors, people with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged residents. The program, funded by county dollars and state resources, enables residents to access medical care, essential errands, and daily activities.

Michael Vieira, who has overseen the county’s transportation system for 38 years, contacted EZ Ride due to an acute shortage of drivers. “With a nationwide shortage of CDL drivers, we went from 40 drivers down to 15, and we needed supplemental transportation to serve our residents,” says Vieira.

EZ Ride and Uber Health help lower costs and improve service

In December 2018, Essex County launched a pilot program with EZ Ride. The ability to launch the program quickly with no long-term commitments made it attractive. Uber Health’s broad coverage and driver availability enabled immediate expansion of service. “As long as someone is ambulatory,” says Vieira, “we can place them in an Uber ride.”

The results have benefited both county residents and program administrators. “Instead of requiring 5 days’ advance notice, we can now offer same-day trips,” says Vieira. The county has also reduced costs significantly. “Our operating costs using shuttle buses and CDL drivers were close to \$30 per trip,” he says. “We now spend about \$18 per ride with EZ Ride and Uber Health. That represents savings of about 33%, while expanding access and flexibility for our residents.

“Working with EZ Ride and Uber means everybody gets a ride. We can serve more people, keep costs under control, and make the experience even better for riders.”

—Michael Vieira, Director of Special Transportation Services, Essex County, NJ

Accessible transportation, no smartphone required

Ensuring accessibility for seniors without smartphones is a core priority. “It’s essential that people don’t need a smartphone to use our service,” Gupta explains. “They just need a phone so we can communicate.” Residents call a central phone number to get the rides approved followed by a call to EZ

Ride coordinators who schedule the ride using QRYde, a customized software, and the Uber Health platform.

“We provide the rider with the driver’s name, vehicle description, and license plate number,” Gupta says. “If needed, we stay on the phone until the vehicle arrives.” This approach removes the digital barriers while maintaining real-time support.

Today, EZ Ride operates in all 21 counties in New Jersey with more than 90% of rides provided by Uber drivers. Its call center handles thousands of rides requests weekly, with average wait time under 30 seconds and call handling times under 3 minutes. “We have built an efficient system,” Gupta says. “A caller can reach a live person quickly, and a driver can be dispatched within minutes. That makes a meaningful difference, especially for seniors.”

Flexible rides improve efficiency and expand service hours

Uber flexible rides have further strengthened the program. These rides allow EZ Ride to preapprove ride windows while giving riders the flexibility to request trips when they’re ready. This is especially valuable for dialysis patients and early-morning appointments. “If someone needs a ride outside of our call center hours, we can give them a text link to a flexible ride,” Gupta explains. “When they’re ready to schedule a ride, they respond to the message and the Uber ride gets dispatched.” Flexible rides are an increasing share of total trips, reducing scheduling friction and call volume while giving riders greater independence.

Visibility and accountability through detailed reporting

Oversight is critical for publicly funded transportation programs. EZ Ride provides detailed monthly reports using Uber platform data, including rider information, trip details, and costs. “This level of reporting helps our partners document how public funds are being used,” Gupta says.

For Essex County, the report provides actionable insights. “We can monitor usage, identify high-frequency riders and ensure the system is being used appropriately,” Vieira explains.

Looking ahead

EZ Ride is working to expand support across New Jersey and is collaborating with Uber Health to unlock wheelchair-accessible vehicle availability in the state. “That’s the next step,” Gupta says. “If we can provide wheelchair-accessible rides, we remove one of the final barriers in New Jersey.”

Working with Uber Health, EZ Ride has developed a scalable model that increases access, improves oversight, and reduces costs. For counties facing driver shortages, rising demand, and budget constraints, this approach demonstrates how modern, on-demand transportation can expand service without expanding a fleet. Most importantly, it helps more residents keep appointments, maintain independence, and stay connected to their communities.