

FTA's Enhanced Mobility Program Case Study

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Background

Boat People SOS, Inc. (BPSOS) is a national nonprofit organization with over 40 years of experience and six branch offices across the United States. Headquartered in Falls Church, VA, the organization's mission is to "empower, organize, and equip Vietnamese individuals and communities in their pursuit of liberty and dignity." Initially, in the 1980s, BPSOS focused on voluntary missions to rescue more than 25,000 Vietnamese boat people from the high seas, advocating for their refugee rights in first-asylum countries.

Over the decades, BPSOS has expanded its scope of services to support immigrants, refugees, victims of trafficking, at-risk students, and survivors of violence within the

United States. More recently, the organization has broadened its international initiatives to assist victims of human rights violations in Vietnam, advocate for Vietnamese asylum seekers in neighboring countries, and rescue individuals affected by human trafficking worldwide.

Project Description

The 2021 RISE-TRANS Enhanced Mobility project goal is to help 200 seniors and individuals with disabilities access various transportation options, including public transit, taxis, Uber, Lyft, and more. To achieve this, BPSOS launched an outreach and education campaign to raise awareness within the local community about available transportation services and how to enroll in RISE.

BPSOS trained their staff to assist clients in overcoming barriers and navigating different transportation options. BPSOS also collaborated with local service providers to refer their clients to RISE. To ensure the Vietnamese American community was informed, BPSOS ran a media campaign through Vietnamese-language radio, newspapers, and magazines. This improved the transportation guidebook, making it available to clients, and offered training sessions—both group and one-on-one—on how

to use services like public transit, Uber, Lyft, and MetroAccess.

Impact

This project has made a huge difference for seniors and individuals with disabilities, giving them the freedom to travel independently to work, medical appointments, grocery shopping, and more. It helped boost their confidence, allowing them to join senior centers and community events, which has reduced their feelings of isolation. For those still working, being able to travel farther from home opened better job opportunities, helping them support their families and improve their financial situation.

For their clients with disabilities, especially those using wheelchairs or having difficulty walking, assistance from BPSOS to utilize Metro-Access Paratransit has been a game-changer. With services like door-to-door assistance, they can get around more easily without relying on others, which has made them feel more independent and less like a burden.

The ModivCare program has been a lifeline for BPSOS Medicaid clients, covering the costs of transportation to medical appointments. This means they do not have to worry about how they will get to the doctor or how to afford the ride, making healthcare more accessible and less stressful.

Lastly, the increase in BPSOS TOPS program's subsidy fund has made a big impact. With the extra support, their clients could easily attend medical appointments, get groceries, and take care of everyday needs. This additional help not only reduced financial stress but also gave their clients more independence and a better quality of life.

Next Steps

BPSOS has entered a new round of funding within the Enhanced Mobility Program (EM6). BPSOS has launched a new project titled Road to Independence through Saving and Education (RISE). This project seeks to continue the initiatives described in the previous project.

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For more information about this project or future solicitations, contact:

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