

Eastern Sierra Transit Authority Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Guideline

Overview

Eastern Sierra Transit Authority, the Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) for Inyo and Mono Counties, is coordinating a pilot project providing mileage reimbursement for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Services for the Transportation Disadvantaged community.

The Eastern Sierra Transit Authority offers non-emergency medical transportation mileage reimbursement services to the Transportation Disadvantaged community: those persons, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, age, or who for other reasons are unable to transport themselves, or to purchase transportation, and are therefore dependent upon others to obtain access to healthcare. Participants must be residents of Inyo or Mono County.

Objectives

Eastern Sierra Transit Authority's Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Services (NEMT) operates to:

- Provide educational information to all area residents about the various forms of transportation that are available for them to use as well as existing programs through which they can obtain transportation assistance.
- Identify older adults and persons with disabilities and those with limited financial means who are in need to transportation for medical services and assist them to take the necessary steps to facilitate access to services.
- Provide incentives for volunteer drivers to assist eligible seniors and persons with disabilities or a person with limited financial means in receiving needed transportation when they do not have any other form of transportation available or are unable to use other forms of transportation.
- Monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of current transportation services and systems, report findings of user levels of satisfaction and complaints to affected organizations, and advocate for transportation services that truly meet the needs of older adults and persons with disabilities and person with limited financial means.

The overall consideration, under which eligibility for NEMT services is extended, is; "will the individual receive needed transportation to access health services if NEMT doesn't help?"

General Program Eligibility

An NEMT applicant will be approved if he/she meets the following eligibility requirements. In all cases, the total circumstance of each applicant will be considered in making a determination of eligibility with the final and overriding intent being the necessity of the service when aiding local residents in obtaining transportation to access to healthcare.

Eligibility Requirements

- Must be Inyo or Mono County Resident
- Must be receiving medical care from a medical facility
- Cannot make the trip because of financial challenge **or**
- The applicant is not able to drive him/herself

The following screening questions may be asked of potential NEMT participants, noting any individual or unusual circumstances which might affect their transportation capabilities or possible eligibility for NEMT services:

- Has individual recently lost or surrendered their license?*
- Can the individual drive their car locally for everyday needs?*
- Is public transportation available where they need to travel for medical services?*
- Is an escort needed (both for transit and at destination)?*
- Can the person physically get in and out of public transit vehicles?*
- Does the person's mobility allow them to walk to the pick-up point for buses or dial-a-ride vehicles that come to their home and from a drop-off location to their final destination (e.g. medical office)?*
- Is the person capable of "waiting" for the vehicle to arrive?*
- Is "through the door" service required?*
- Is the person well enough and able to plan enough in advance to schedule travel?*
- Do riders feel safe when using or waiting for the vehicle?*
- Can the person physically tolerate the rigors of the transportation method?*
- Can person afford transit costs, fees and fares?*

NEMT Appeal Process

An appeal takes place when the participant feels their eligibility should change, mileage increased, or the determination reconsidered for another reason. They can appeal by writing a letter and explaining why they feel their application should be re-evaluated. When an appeal letter is received, the appeal will be submitted for review to an appeal committee, the decision will be sent to the appellant.

Mileage Reimbursement

The rate of reimbursement will be equal to or less than the IRS Standard Rate then in effect, paid up to the maximum mileage allowed for each month for each individual. The 2014 IRS reimbursement rate for medical is currently 23.5 cents per mile. To be eligible for reimbursement, each one-way trip must begin or end in Inyo or Mono County.

Following are the standard mileage allowances permitted for existing funding sources:

- 300 miles per one-way trip
- 600 miles per round trip

Following are maximum and minimum monthly reimbursements for existing funding sources:

- Maximum monthly reimbursement \$750.00
- Minimum reimbursement \$10.00

Participant Submission of Request for Reimbursement

The Participant is responsible for completing and submitting the Request for NEMT Reimbursement forms to Eastern Sierra Transit Authority at the end of each month of travel and must be received in Eastern Sierra Transit's office no later than the 10th of the month following each month for which mileage reimbursement is requested. **"Requests must be received no later than the 10th of the month following any month of travel."** Processing of payment will take 30 days.

All checks will be made payable to the Enrolled NEMT participant, or their guardian/custodian. It is the participant's responsibility to reimburse their driver.

Form Completion

Request for NEMT Reimbursement forms must be complete, including information for each one-way trip:

- ✓ Dates
- ✓ City name at start of trip
- ✓ City name of Destination
- ✓ Exact mileage for each one-way trip
- ✓ Signature of the driver in ink
- ✓ Signature of the Participant in ink
- ✓ Stamp for Doctor's office or medical facility

Volunteer Drivers

Eastern Sierra Transit Authority does not recruit or maintain a volunteer driver pool. **It is the rider's responsibility to recruit their own volunteer driver.**

Passengers may recruit more than one volunteer driver.

1. Volunteer Drivers are required to sign a release from liability and agree to indemnify and hold harmless Eastern Sierra Transit Authority.
2. It is the Volunteer Driver's individual responsibility to have a valid California's Driver License, to carry the minimum motor vehicle insurance required by the State of California, and to abide by all laws and regulations.
3. Volunteer Drivers are expected to abide by all driving laws and regulations.
4. Volunteer Drivers may assist Riders to accurately and correctly complete their monthly *Request for Mileage Reimbursement* forms and to make sure that

request forms are mailed to the program immediately at the end of the month of travel for which a reimbursement request is submitted.

5. Reimbursement payments are mailed to Riders for distribution to their Volunteer Escort-Drivers.
6. Reimbursements are paid for mileage transporting the passenger to approved medical appointments, up to the per trip and per month limits established for your rider.
7. Volunteer Drivers, who do not wish to be reimbursed for their volunteer service, may donate reimbursement payments back to the program.
8. The passenger and/or volunteer driver are under no continuing obligation to one-another, and may discontinue participation in this program at any time.

Scheduling Trips

All trips are to be arranged between the passenger and the volunteer driver *at mutually convenient times.*