



## **2023 WATERTOWN PROGRAMMING GRANT**

WeCAB is pleased to have the opportunity to apply for a Watertown community grant; since 2014 WeCAB has enhanced the quality of life for Watertown residents and helped to promote healthy living and active lifestyles.

WeCAB is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that provides transportation to residents of Watertown and other communities in Carver County and the western suburbs to medical appointments, grocery stores, food shelves, worship services, volunteer opportunities, social events, and more. Rides can be provided 24/7 depending on the volunteer driver's schedule. While WeCAB does ask riders for a suggested contribution based on miles driven, services are provided regardless of an individual's ability to contribute the suggested donation.

### **WeCAB REQUEST**

To help provide transportation services to Watertown, we are requesting a grant of \$2,000 to be used specifically for the recruitment of volunteer Watertown drivers to provide rides for Watertown residents 18 years +.

Second, the grant will also be used by WeCAB to explore possibilities of attracting additional riders.

The goal is to identify and use any possible print and social media available to reach Watertown residents.

### **BACKGROUND TO SUPPORT REQUEST**

Since WeCAB's 2011 inception of service, WeCAB has provided over 25,000 rides to almost 1,500 riders for a total of over 331,000 volunteer miles driven.

WeCAB can provide transportation only when we have enough enthusiastic volunteers to pick up all the requested rides. We are currently in need of more volunteer drivers. Unfortunately, during the last two months of 2022 we had to turn away 86 rides as we didn't have enough volunteers to pick up all of the rides. We have seen the need in our communities spike with more ride requests due to the continued removal of public transit in our area. Last year we gained 65% more new riders than the previous year. Although we increased our volunteer drivers last fiscal year by 10%, we found that we need a great deal more financial resources to create a scalable volunteer retention and recruitment model. We also know that the dramatic increase in new riders has weighed down our system even more. We have applied for an AmeriCorps Vista member, if awarded this member will be working full-time to create the scalable volunteer retention and recruitment program that WeCAB needs. We have contracted

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WeCAB is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization.

WeCAB does not refuse any rides to registered riders if they are unable to contribute.



with a Fundraising Consultant firm that is assisting us to quickly scale our grants revenue and assist with individual funders. We have also contracted a social media content creator to increase our social media presence getting the word out about the need for more drivers. We are in negotiations with a marketing firm to help us create a marketing plan targeted at gaining more volunteers. We have increased our projected annual budget this year to \$121,000 from \$77,000 last year to dedicate more resources to our volunteer program.

Watertown continues to be a growing western Carver County city that has limited affordable transportation options for its residents. The majority of WeCAB requests for Watertown rides continue to mostly be fulfilled by volunteer drivers from other Carver County cities including Chaska, Victoria, and Waconia. Our goal is to use the requested Watertown grant to continue specific advertising for Watertown residents to become volunteer drivers.

Second, we believe that in Watertown, residents may not be fully informed about WeCAB and how to use WeCAB's services. To this end, WeCAB will use the grant to tailor the advertising of WeCAB's services specifically to Watertown residents' needs.

Third, we would like to use part of the funds for a volunteer incentive program. This program will encourage new volunteers to sign up and for current members or community members to recruit new volunteers.

With your continued support we believe that we can continue to increase our services to Watertown and the surrounding Carver County communities.

### **IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPORTATION**

According to research by the Center for Rural Policy and Development, just as the need for transportation for older adults has been rising, it has become more difficult for programs to recruit and retain volunteer drivers. And according to the Executive Director of Living at Home Network, "having access to transportation is a huge determining factor in determining whether or not people can stay safely in their homes."

### **WeCAB CONTACT INFORMATION**

Thank you for the opportunity to apply for the 2023 Programming Grant. We will be happy to talk with you about additional information you may need or wish to see.

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