



FINAL REPORT

Go Vets: Veterans Individualized Marketing and Outreach Program

Program: May 2018 - August 2018

Prepared by Rogue Valley Transportation District



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transportation connects us to our work, family and friends, doctor, grocery stores, and all the other places that help us live our lives. Vulnerable populations, such as Veterans, can face unique challenges when it comes to accessing employment, medical appointments, and social and recreational opportunities. Recognizing this, the Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) of Southern Oregon developed the Go Vets program which ran from April to August 2018. The goal of the Go Vets program was to increase Veterans' access to medical appointments, work, and social and recreational opportunities by raising their awareness and confidence in using transportation options. The program achieved its goals of increasing transportation access, awareness, and confidence by hiring a fellow Veteran to hand deliver 375 customized "Go Kits" full of transportation information to Veterans; hosting five free community events and participating in four partner events reaching 400 Veterans; and building capacity at local Veteran partner organizations. To evaluate the impact of the program, the project team administered a baseline and post-program survey to participants. The results revealed the following key findings:

- Two in three post-program survey respondents (66%) reported that they are able to access medical appointments "very well," **doubling** from 33% in the pre-program survey.
- Nearly half of post-program survey respondents (48%) reported that they are able to access work "very well," **more than doubling** from 20% in the pre-program survey.
- Post-program survey respondents reported a **39 percentage point decrease in missed medical appointments, a 26 percentage point decrease in missed work/employment programs, and a 41 percentage point decrease in missed social or recreational opportunities** due to a lack of transportation.
- Respondents reported **increasing their regular use (once a month or more) of bicycling and riding the bus by 7 percentage points and 33 percentage points, respectively.**
- Awareness and confidence using transportation options **increased across all transportation options** throughout the course of the program.

Additional results from the post-program participant survey show:

- The **majority of respondents (84%) agree they feel more connected to the community** because of the Go Vets program. Similarly, 86% agree that the Go Vets program helped them connect to community and Veteran resources.
- **Nearly all respondents (95%) agree that the Go Vets program helped them access destinations and services by riding transit, biking, walking, and/or carpooling.** In further support of this finding, 93% of respondents agree that the Go Kit helped them access destinations by using these transportation options.

BACKGROUND

RVTD's Go Vets program was funded by the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) Special Transportation Funds (STF) through a statewide competitive grant program. ODOT selected Go Vets as a project that could provide other agencies/organizations in Oregon with lessons to better reach and serve the transportation needs of the Veteran community.

Prior to the Go Vets program RVTD was awarded the Federal Transit Administration's Veterans Transportation Community Livability Initiative (VTCLI) grant. RVTD used those funds to acquire property for the para-transit brokerage, which serves many Veterans in our community. Through RVTD's participation in the VTCLI program, staff learned about projects throughout the country that aimed to improve mobility and access for Veterans. RVTD, with experience in promoting transportation options and implementing individualized marketing (IM) campaigns (defined below), saw the need and opportunity to improve the mobility of Veterans through direct engagement, education, and encouragement.

IM programs have shown success in engaging communities to change their transportation behavior through programming of events, targeted marketing, education, and encouragement. IM programs have primarily been used to reduce drive-alone trips and increase the frequency of trips taken by bike, foot, transit, and carpooling. The Go Vets program provides a unique opportunity to use IM mechanics to improve Veteran's mobility; using transportation options to play an important role in the reintegration process.

PROJECT TEAM

- Paige West, Planning and Strategic Programs Manager at RVTD
- Edem Gomez, Transportation Demand Management Planner at RVTD
- Bryan Simpson, Veterans Travel Trainer at RVTD
- David Fulton, Veterans Travel Trainer at RVTD

RVTD worked with ODOT's consultant team, Alta Planning + Design, during the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages.

TARGET POPULATION

Veterans represent a large portion of the Rogue Valley population. According to the 2017 US Census, 20,965 Veterans live in Jackson County alone, representing nearly 10% of the County population. Through RVTD's existing knowledge of Veterans in the area and through outreach and discussions with local Veteran service programs, there was a clear need (especially among a subset of the local Veteran community such as elderly, physically disabled, low income, and Veterans suffering mental health issues such as PTSD), for increased mobility and access to transportation options.

Due to the geography of the Rogue Valley, medical services, Veterans resources, employment, education, and social and recreational opportunities are difficult to access for those with limited transportation choices or a lack of access or knowledge of the available transportation options. There are 11 cities in Jackson County, with important destinations spread across the county, making it very difficult for Veterans reach those destinations without the awareness and confidence to use transportation options.

The Go Vets program targeted local Veterans who were one step away from homelessness, have trouble accessing medical, work, social opportunities, had poor awareness of transportation options, and most likely did not have access to a personal vehicle.

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

RVTD worked extensively to identify and engage local Veteran service organizations in the Rogue Valley. Preceding the formal launch of the Go Vets program RVTD organized a meeting with every identified organization working with Veterans in the Rogue Valley. The goals of the meetings were to inform local stakeholders about the Go Vets program and objectives; increase community support for similar programs and efforts; and to gain a better understanding of the barriers local Veterans face not only in accessing transportation but also healthcare, mental health services, employment, education and reintegration. RVTD conducted stakeholder outreach with the following organizations and community groups:

- **ACCESS:** The Community Action Agency of Jackson County houses a Veteran Support Services team that help Veterans and their families find employment and permanent housing.
- **AllCare Health:** A local healthcare plan and service provider with many Veterans served through their Case Manager program.
- **American Legion (*Rogue Valley chapter*):** The nation's largest wartime veterans service organization, committed to mentoring youth and sponsorship of Veteran service programs.
- **Columbia Care:** a mental health treatment agency that specializes in designing, developing, and operating residential treatment programs. In addition to residential services, they also provide comprehensive mental health treatment, short-term crisis stabilization, and suicide prevention services. Case Managers work with many local Veterans clients.
- **Disabled American Veterans (DAV):** A non-profit Veteran service organization that provides lifetime support for Veterans of all generations and their families. DAV primarily provides non-emergency trips to medical appointments operated by Volunteer drivers and assist Veterans disability claims.
- **Easter Seals:** A national non-profit organization with offices in Medford. Easter Seals houses a Military and Veterans Services program that seeks to connect Veterans to education and employment opportunities and promote self-sufficiency.
- **Housing Authority of Jackson County (HAJC):** Local low-income housing provider and HUD funding recipient. Operates 2 housing properties with Veterans and their families as the target population, also houses Resident Services Program which promotes self-sufficiency among participant residents.

- **Jackson County Veterans Advisory Committee:** Network of Veteran service providers to share information, news, and resources. Organized by Jackson County Health and Human Services.
- **Non-Commissioned Officer Association:** Advocacy organization for Veteran Non-Commissioned Officers.
- **Order of the Purple Heart:** Serves Purple Heart recipients, it is the only Veterans service organization comprised strictly of “combat” Veterans and works to assist Veterans with rehabilitation, reintegration, and self-sufficiency resources. The organization works to reduce Veterans suicide by connecting Veterans to mental health resources and raising awareness.
- **Project Community Connect:** A United Way of Jackson County and Jackson County Community Services Consortium program that works to help change for the better the lives of people threatened with or experiencing a loss of home and security. Many of their program participants and target audience are Veterans facing housing insecurity.
- **Rogue Community College:** RCC houses a Veterans Service Center that serves current and prospective RCC students and guides, mentors, and advises student Veterans as they navigate higher education, select a career goal, complete college, and move into a professional career.
- **Rogue Valley Veterans and Community Outreach (RVVCO):** RVVCO is a local non-profit organization whose objective is designed to assist Veterans in accessing the necessary supportive services, and skill development for obtaining and maintaining employment with the goal of independent living including providing transitional housing and connecting Veterans to permanent housing opportunities. RVVCO works with all Veterans, regardless of their military discharge status.
- **Southern Oregon Veteran Benefit:** SOVB assists Veterans with education and employment barriers. Their goal is to help Veterans become successful in completing their college careers with grants from S.O.V.B funding.
- **Southern Oregon University (SOU):** SOU houses the Veterans Resource Office (VRO), the VRO assists Veterans and their families in pursuing their educational, professional, and vocational objectives. The VRO serves as a liaison between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the university to certify enrollment, provide information on Veteran benefits, and monitor students’ degree plans and academic progress.
- **Team Overland:** A nonprofit organization based in Southern Oregon that guide outdoor adventures as an outlet for Veterans to overcome challenges associated with service related physical and mental health disabilities, and to facilitate Veteran reintegration back into civilian society.
- **Veterans Affairs- Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center & Clinics:** Regional Veterans Affairs office, healthcare clinics, including inpatient rehabilitation program. Provides local and regional Veterans with healthcare, mental health, and other Veteran service programs.
- **Vet Center:** Vet Center is a community based organization and part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs with offices in Grants Pass. The goal of the Vet Center program is to provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to eligible veterans to help them make a satisfying post-war readjustment to civilian life.

- **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW):** A nonprofit Veterans service organization comprised of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, guard and reserve forces. VFW has an active chapter in the Rogue Valley.
- **Vet Net:** A consortium of local Veteran service providers that share information and resources to better serve and understand the local Veteran community.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Through the stakeholder outreach process RVTD formed strong partnerships with several programs. The following organizations were key to the development and implementation of the Go Vets program by actively supporting program administration tasks, co-organizing events, and distributing ongoing communications:

- ACCESS
- Columbia Care
- Easter Seals
- Housing Authority of Jackson County
- Rogue Community College
- RVVCO
- VA-SORCC

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH KEY TAKEAWAYS

Through the stakeholder outreach process, RVTD developed a better understanding of local Veterans' needs. The outreach process also helped RVTD identify program communications and outreach strategies and allowed RVTD to learn about services being provided to Veterans which staff promoted during interactions with Veterans.

VETERANS TRAVEL TRAINER

RVTD hired two Veterans Travel Trainers, Dave Fulton and Bryan Simpson, to serve as the faces of the Go Vets program. During the program, Dave and Bryan worked directly with Veterans to increase their mobility and with partner organizations to help them better serve the transportation needs of the Veteran community. Dave is a 9-year Veteran of the Oregon Army National Guard and helped develop the Go Vets program. Bryan Simpson is an 8-year Veteran of the US Navy and is an active member Oregon Army National Guard. Bryan helped tailor the program branding, events, and communication to the local Veteran community and program partners.

Benefits of a Veterans Travel Trainer:

- A Veteran serving as the face of the Go Vets program proved to be a good resource for Veterans.

- Veterans may be more likely to engage in learning about transportation options from another Veteran than a non-Veteran. There is an established understanding and trust among the Veteran community to one another that is difficult to replicate with a non-Veteran staff.
- It was invaluable to have a Veteran who could navigate the common barriers Veterans face during reintegration, such as accessing services and difficulty asking for help, as well as understanding Veterans cultural norms



RVTD Veteran Travel Trainer providing individual training on using RVTD's fixed route system.

PROGRAM APPROACH

Individualized Marketing programs involve detailed planning and coordination among partners, funders, stakeholders, and staff. A program approach was created to schedule and track the following program elements:

- Survey development
- Materials design and procurement
- Database management and training
- Event planning
- Fulfillment and deliveries
- Communication and promotion methods
- Evaluation and reporting

MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

The following suite of evaluation, marketing, and educational materials were developed specifically for this program:

- **Pre- and post-program surveys:** Establishing a clear baseline of participant travel behavior is important in determining the effectiveness of any individualized marketing program when in comparison to a coordinated post-program survey. Due to the unique goals of the Go Vets Individualized Marketing program (increasing access instead of reducing drive-alone mode share and vehicle miles traveled), the project team developed an appropriate suite of survey questions.
- **Custom Logo and Branding:** The Go Vets logo and branding was developed through coordination between Alta Planning + Design, RVTD, and program partners. It was important that a program name and accompanying logo resonated with local Veterans and partner groups. RVTD worked closely with program partners throughout the design process to develop appropriate branding.
- **Go Vets Map and Guide:** The Map and Guide was a key educational component included in all Go Kits. It included a map of the program area with transit and bike routes and the locations of Veteran service organizations. The guide also included descriptions of the programs and services offered by the Veteran service organizations and contact information.
- **Go Vets Veterans Travel Training Brochure:** The project team developed a brochure to promote RVTD's Travel Training service offered to Veterans, both in group and individual settings.
- **Go Vets Headphones:** The project team included headphones as a tool for participants experiencing PTSD to use to avoid distraction when riding transit. Headphones provide some comfort to those with PTSD and can help with focus and concentration.

- **Go Kit Bag:** Branded zipper bag that participants could use every day.
- **Go Kit Bag Tag:** Plastic luggage tag that can be used for personal luggage and bags.
- **Program Posters:** Posters were distributed and posted to promote the program s and upcoming events.

All custom materials were developed using the Go Vets branding.

GO KITS

Providing customized transportation options information in the form of ‘Go Kits’ is a proven way to increase awareness and use of transportation options. The materials and maps in the Go Kits not only provided recipients with important information, but also led them to consider the benefits of transportation options and how they can better access important services, employment, and recreational opportunities.



Travel information and materials included in Go Kits.

Veterans could order their Go Kit through three methods, depending on what options best suited their circumstance. An order form was available on the program website where participants could submit it digitally, paper forms were also available at partner locations, and

Veterans could also order via a phone call to RVTD. Providing paper and phone call ordering options was especially important for this population as many were elderly, disabled, or had little to no access to a computer for online ordering. The Go Vets order form invited Veterans to select from a variety of free transportation information, resources, and included partner program information. All participants received a free bus pass with unlimited rides through the end of August (the extent of the program). Users could use their bus pass for any trip within RVTD's service system. Participants could also order one of two travel tools, a stainless-steel water bottle or re-usable rain poncho. Figure 1 shows the percentage of participants who ordered each Go Kit item.

Go Kits were hand delivered to the participants residence or listed address. When possible, staff coordinated a drop off time with the participant to provide in-person support. At this time the Veterans Travel Trainer could learn more about the transportation barriers the participant faced or answer any questions they may have.

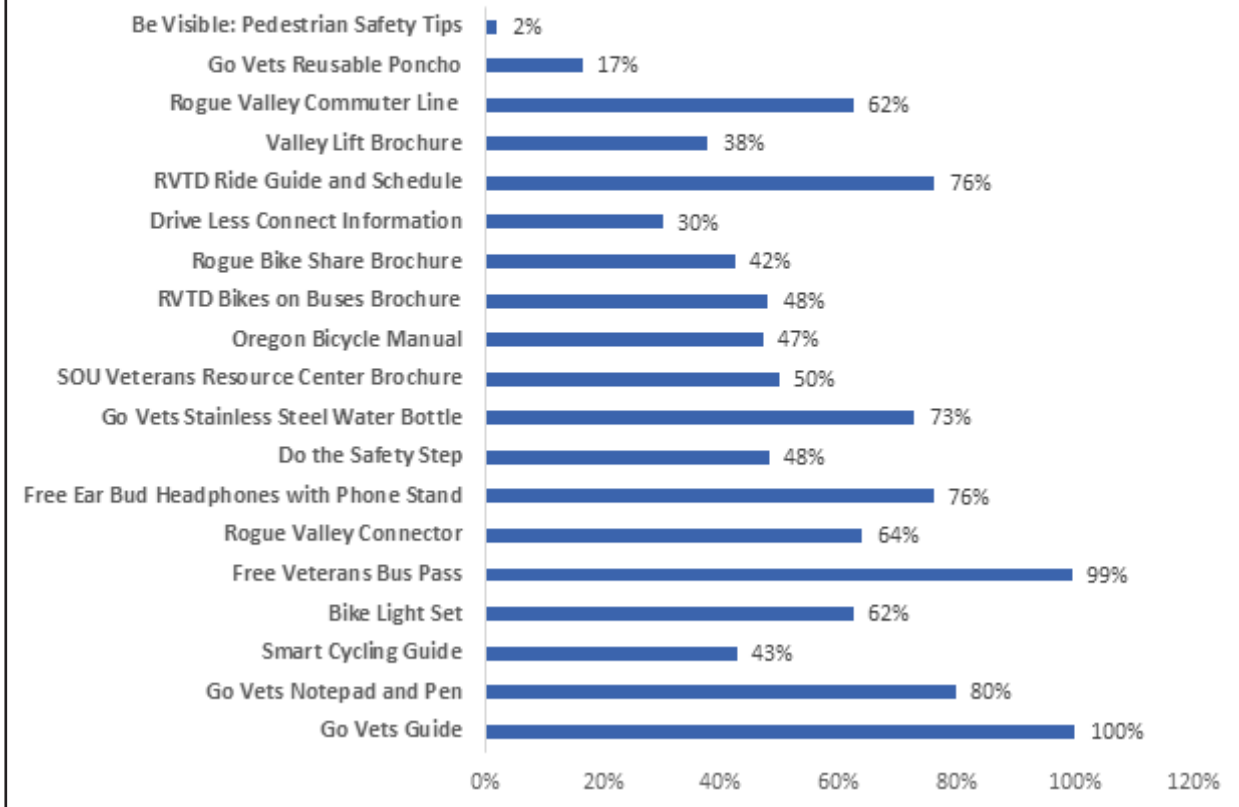
Participants could also select a designated pick-up location where the Go Kit could be picked up by the participant at their convenience. The locations included:

- RVTD Admin Offices
- RVVCO
- ACCESS
- SOU Veterans Resource Center



RVTD Veterans Travel Trainer delivering a Go Kit at the VA-SORCC.

Figure 1: Percentage of Go Kit Materials Ordered by Program Participants (N=375)



EVENTS

During the program, the Go Vets team organized five custom program events and attended several RVTD and program partner events. Throughout the program RVTD’s Veterans Travel Trainer, Bryan Simpson, also provided outreach at RVTD’s transfer station, partner program locations, and other locations that served Veterans.

RVTD developed custom events for the program in a manner where participants were progressively integrated with the general community. A key component of the reintegration process is to help Veterans become more comfortable in society and engage with the community at large. The first custom event was specifically organized only for Veterans so participants had the comfort of knowing they would only be around other Veterans. The proceeding events, a bike ride to a concert and transit trip to a baseball game, brought Veterans together to attend a general community event. Custom program events and partners events are detailed in the section below.



Veterans gather for a photo after the Go Vets BBQ at Don Jones Memorial Park.

CUSTOM GO VETS EVENTS

Go Vets Train the Trainer: Travel Training Session

May 18, 2018

Location: Veteran Administration Offices, White City, OR

Time: 9am-10am Attendance: 5

The Go Vets program arranged a training session for staff at the VA, the goal of the session was to increase capacity at the VA to better serve their clients transportation needs, learn about the Go Vets program, and promote participation with clients. Staff learned how to use and navigate RVTD's fixed route transit system and learned about other transportation options available in the area.

Pedals for Patriots Workshops

June 29, July 9, August 3, 2018

Location: Medford Warehouse

Time: 11am-1pm Attendance: 15

The Pedals for Patriots program refurbishes used bicycles, donated by the community and local Police Departments, and provides them to Veterans in need of transportation. The Go Vets program organized several workshops to fix bicycles and help Veterans learn basic bike maintenance skills. Veteran participants volunteered their time to help fix bicycles and at the end of the workshops had the opportunity to take a bike for themselves. The Pedals for Patriots program donated 56 bicycles to Veterans by the end of the Go Vets program.



Veteran helps fix a bicycle for the Pedals for Patriots workshop.

Go Vets BBQ and Social

June 30, 2018

Location: Don Jones Memorial Park, Central Point, OR

Time: 11am-1pm Attendance: 55

The Go Vets program organized a BBQ and social for program participants to attend, learn about the program, and meet program staff. An RVTD bus was used to transport participants from the VA in White City to the event location in Central Point, the Veterans Travel Trainer used the ride as an opportunity to provide group travel training. Several program partners attended the event to connect and enroll Veterans in local services, such as Rogue Community College, ACCESS, and RVVCO. A barber attended the event and provided free haircuts to those in need. Go Vets signed up attendees to the program, fulfilled Go Kits on the spot, and delivered a short transportation options presentation. Food and refreshments were provided.

Concerts in the Park Bike Ride



Attendees of the Go Vets BBQ enjoy food and refreshments.

July 12, 2018

Location: Hawthorne Park to Bear Creek Park, Medford, OR

Time: 6pm-8pm

RVTD organized a bike ride of Veteran participants to a Concert in the Park event hosted by the City of Medford Parks and Recreation Department. The bike ride was approximately 4 miles round trip on the Bear Creek Greenway. Free pizza, refreshments, and a safety light were provided to Veteran participants.

A Day at the Ballpark with Go Vets

July 19, 2018

Location: Harry and David Field, Medford, OR

Time: 6:00pm-9:30pm Attendance: 35

RVTD paid for 35 Veterans to attend a Medford Rogues baseball game. A group of 20 Veterans were picked up and dropped off via an RVTD bus from the VA in White City to the baseball game in Medford. The Veterans Travel Trainer used the bus ride as an opportunity to provide travel training to the group, teaching participants how to read a bus schedule, use the fare box, request a stop, and load a bike on the bus. Other program participants were connected to carpooling and biking opportunities to attend the event. Participants appreciated the event and the chance to meet new Veterans and be part of a public event. All participants received a free meal and drink.



Veteran participants at the Baseball Event at Harry and David Field.

Travel Training at Columbia Care Housing September 7, 2018

Location: Transitional Housing for Columbia Care, Medford, OR
Time: 8am-9am Attendance: 9

Columbia Care requested RVTD to deliver a Travel Training class to their resident clients. The Veterans Travel trainer covered use of RVTD's transit system as well as information about the other transportation options in the area.



Participants learn to use transit from Travel Trainer on their way to the Go Vets Baseball event.

PARTNER EVENTS

Vet Net Meeting

May 14, 2018

Location: Parkside Café

Time: 9am-10am

Attendance: 12

A meeting was put together by a group of organizations to talk about what each program offers local Veterans. The meeting allowed organizations to network, learn about the different services provided in the region and work on understanding the needs of Veterans. RVTD worked with all partner programs to promote the Go Vets program.

RVVCO's Third Tuesday

May 15, June 19, July 17, 2018

Location: Rogue Valley Veterans Community Outreach, Medford, OR

Time: 11am -2pm Attendance: 300 (approximately 100 Veterans at each event)

Rogue Valley Veterans and Community Outreach (RVVCO) sponsors a monthly outreach event in which several community partners meet in one place to offer support to Veterans in Jackson County. Throughout the event, Veterans can enjoy a free lunch and get free haircuts from Supercuts. On average, 100 Veterans attended each of the three events to meet with various partners to find out and receive services.



RVVCO Staff and RVTD Veterans Travel Trainer at outreach event.

RVTD EVENTS

The following events were organized by RVTD as part of the annual Go by Bike Week campaign in May, which encourages the local community to explore biking as transportation. The campaign is widely marketed throughout the region for the public. While most of the events were not specifically developed for Veterans in mind, they were all promoted to Go Vets program participants and program partners. Although several Veterans attended the events, there was no attendance keeping specifically for Veterans, so attendance numbers are not included with this report.

- **Share the Trail: Ashland.** May 14th, 2018
- **Share the Trail: Medford.** May 15th, 2018
- **Ashland Bike Breakfast.** May 16th, 2018
- **Honor Ride by Go Vets.** May 17th, 2018
- **National Bike to Work Breakfast** May 18th, 2018



Veterans on an RVTD bus during a Travel Training Class.

COMMUNICATIONS

Website: RVTD hosted the program webpage at www.rvtd.org/GoVets. Participants could order a Go Kit or see a list of upcoming program events on the website. The webpage also provides information on RVTD services such as Veterans Travel Training, how qualifying Veterans can access reduced fare, the Pedals for Patriots bike program, as well as program contacts. The webpage is being used post-program as RVTD will maintain the branding and continue Veterans programming.

Email: The project team used MailChimp, an email marketing service, to promote events, share program updates, and promote relevant and educational information about transportation options and program partner information in an e-newsletter format. It was discovered that many participants had limited access to email because they either had no valid email address or had limited computer skills to be able to check their email addresses. Of the 375 Veterans that signed up for the program only 276 provided a valid email address, and of those, the average open rate of emails was 24%.

Direct Phone Calling: Direct phone calling was used to contact program participants to schedule a delivery time, notify them about upcoming events, or provide them with program updates. Since many program participants had poor access to email it was important to directly communicate with participants by phone. Many program participants called the Go Vets phone number to ask about program services and to order their Go Kit if they had no access to a computer.



GO VETS

BBQ

Friday, June 30
11am - 1pm
Don Jones Memorial Park
Central Point

Calling all Veterans! Join the Go Vets team for a good old fashioned BBQ and learn about the program, local Veteran services and your transportation options!

Hotdogs, burgers, and refreshments will be provided! Join us for this free event!

For more info visit: RVTD.org/GoVets



GO VETS

BIKE RIDE TO CONCERTS IN THE PARK

Thursday, July 12th
6pm - 8pm
Hawthorne Park → Bear Creek Park

Join the Go Vets team for a bike ride to Medford's Concert in the park! We will be meeting at Hawthorne Park and riding to Bear Creek park to listen to 'The Olson Brothers Band'. Bring your own bike and helmet! Snacks and refreshments provided!

For more info visit: RVTD.org/GoVets



A DAY AT THE BALL PARK WITH GO VETS

Medford Rogues

Thursday, July 19th
6pm - 9:30pm
RSVP Required!

Join the Go Vets program for a Medford Rogues baseball game, a soda and a hotdog! Only 35 spots are available! You must reserve a spot! Please RSVP by emailing: GoVets@rvtd.org or calling 541-608-2423

 **GO VETS**

For more info visit: RVTD.org/GoVets

Posters created for Custom Events.

Posters: Developed by RVTD staff for several Go Vets events. Posters were distributed through program partners and hung in areas frequented by Veterans.

Social Media: The Go Vets program used RVTD's existing social media outlets to promote the program goals and events. Information about the program, events, and partner services were shared to RVTD's Facebook page, Twitter, and Instagram. While RVTD primarily promoted the Go Vets program through existing channels via program partners and by reaching Veterans directly, RVTD used social media to share program news to the community and spread word about Go Vets events.

EVALUATION

The goal of the Go Vets program was to increase Veterans' access to medical appointments, work, and social and recreational opportunities by raising their awareness and confidence in using transportation options. The following summary describes the methodology used to evaluate the program and the final results. The findings indicate that the program was successful in achieving its goal.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The project team developed and administered a baseline survey and a post-program survey to measure changes in participants' access to medical appointments, employment, and social and recreational activities and their awareness and confidence in using transportation options over the course of the program. The baseline survey was combined with the paper and online versions of the Go Kit order form. Program participants took the baseline survey on an ongoing basis throughout the program. After ending Go Kit deliveries in August 2018, the project team administered the post-program survey online, on paper, and through direct phone calling. Only program participants who received a Go Kit were invited to take the post-program survey; anyone who reported not participating in the program was excluded from the results. Participants who completed the post-program survey were awarded a September bus pass on their bus pass accounts, providing them with an additional month of unlimited rides, valued at \$56. Participants also had the chance to win either a \$100 Walmart Gift Card or a \$50 Fred Meyers Gift Card for completing their post-program surveys. Table 1 below summarizes the baseline and post-program survey dates and response rates.

	Baseline Survey	Post-Program Survey
Survey Dates	April 30, 2018-July 27, 2018	July 30, 2018-August 24, 2018
# of Completed Surveys	375	210
Response Rate	N/A*	56% (of 375)

**Total target population count not estimated, no baseline survey rate available.*

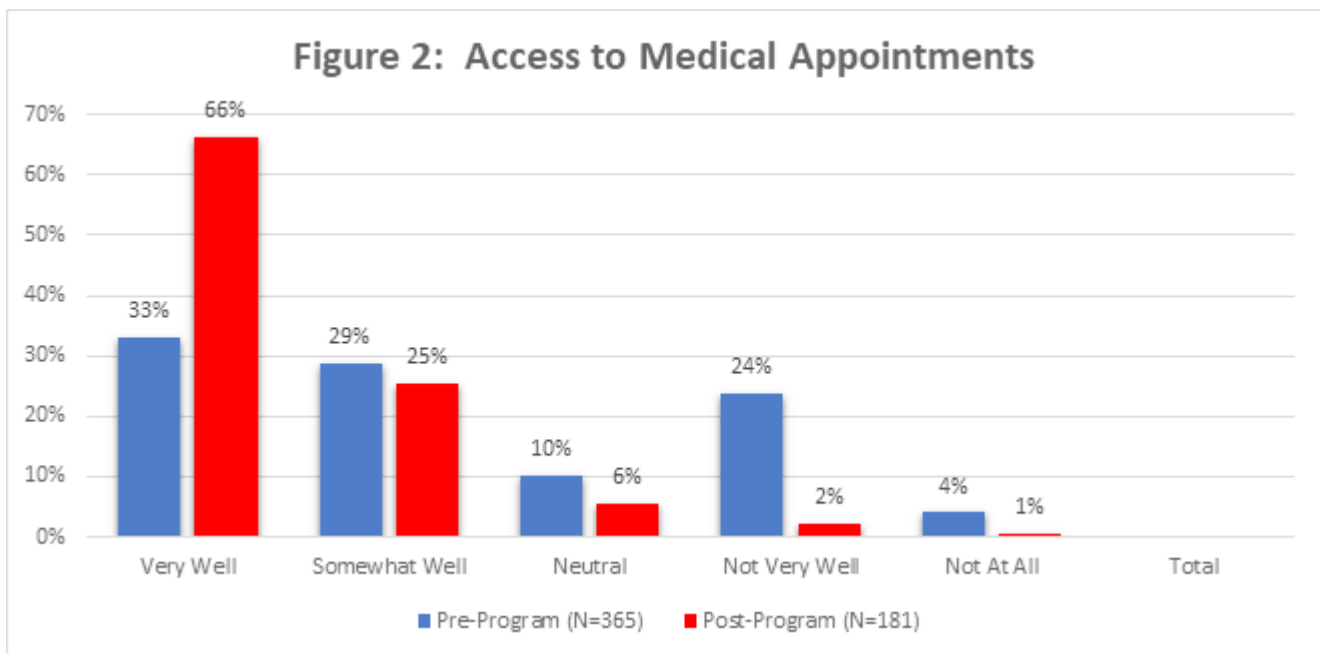
In addition to questions about personal travel behavior and basic demographics, the baseline and post-program surveys asked respondents how well they are able to access medical appointments and work. To further determine program effectiveness respondents were asked if they had missed medical appointments, work or employment programs, or social and recreational opportunities in the previous 3 months (pre-program survey) or 1 month (post-program survey) due to a lack of transportation. When pre- and post-program surveys are compared to one another any change in access to important services/destinations, increased transportation options usage can be used to determine program effectiveness.

SURVEY FINDINGS

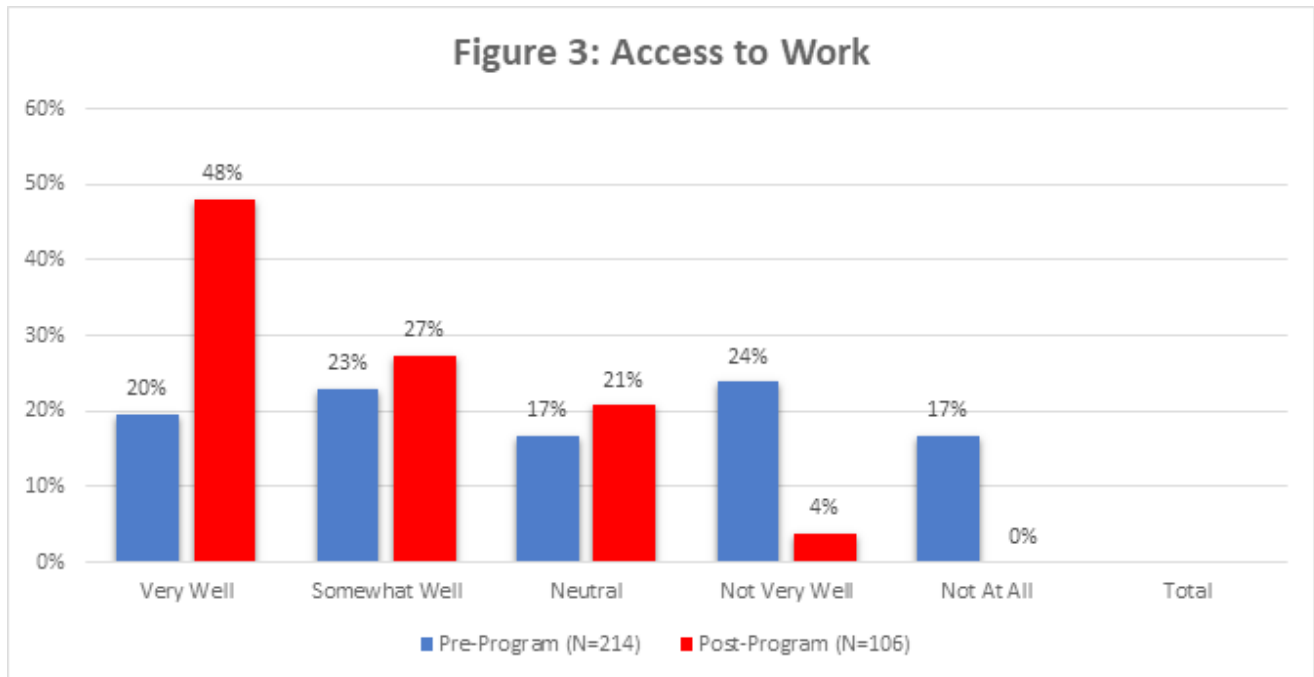
Participant Access to Medical Appointments and Work:

To evaluate the changes in a participants' access to medical appointments and work, the baseline and post-program surveys asked respondents how well they were able to access these destinations. Respondents had the option to provide one of the following answers 1) Very well, 2) Somewhat well, 3) Neutral, 4) Not very well, 5) Not at all, or 6) N/A. For the purposes of accurately measuring the level of access, N/A responses were removed from the survey analysis.

As Figure 2 shows, two in three post-program survey respondents (66%) reported they are able to access medical appointments "very well." This doubled from the baseline survey where 33% of respondents answered this way.



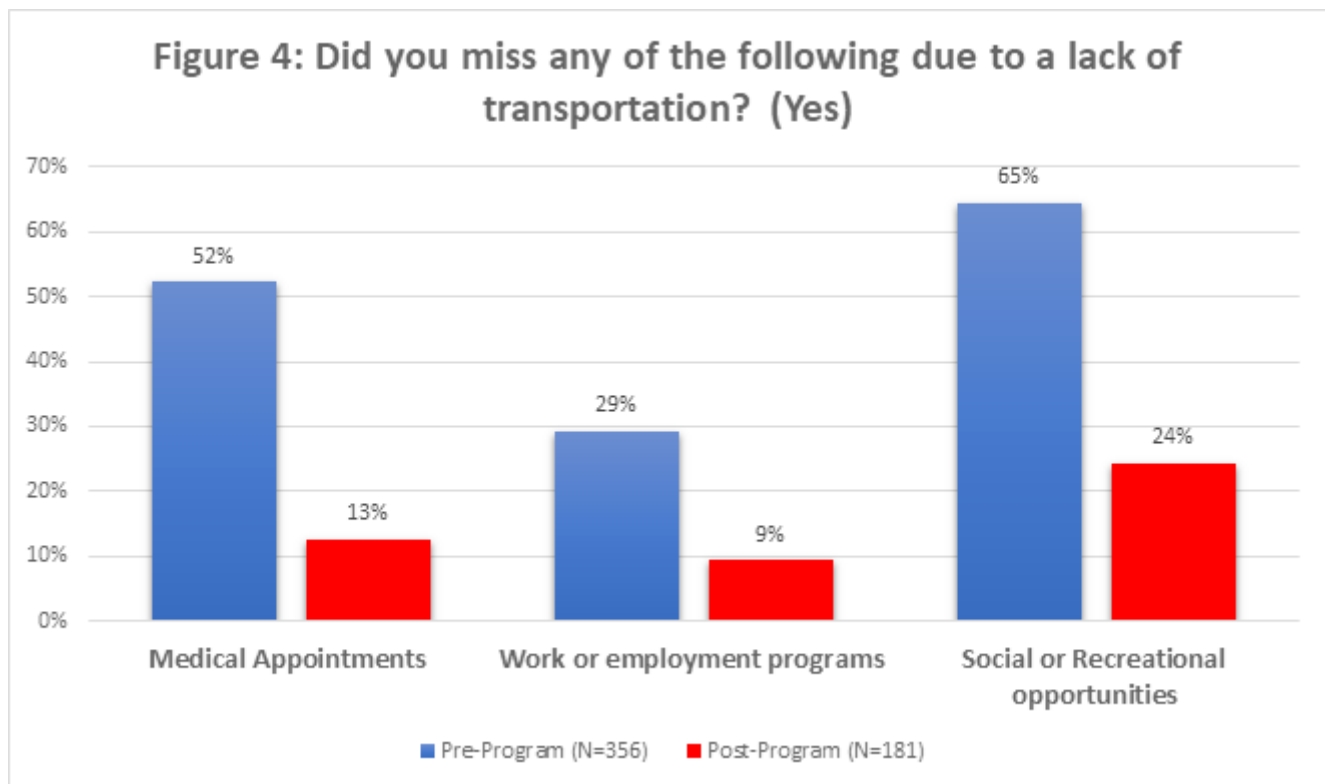
As Figure 3 shows, nearly half of post-program survey respondents (48%) reported that they are able to access work “very well.” This more than doubled from the pre-program survey.



Participants Missing Medical Appointments, Work/Employment Programs, or Social/Recreational Opportunities due to a lack of transportation:

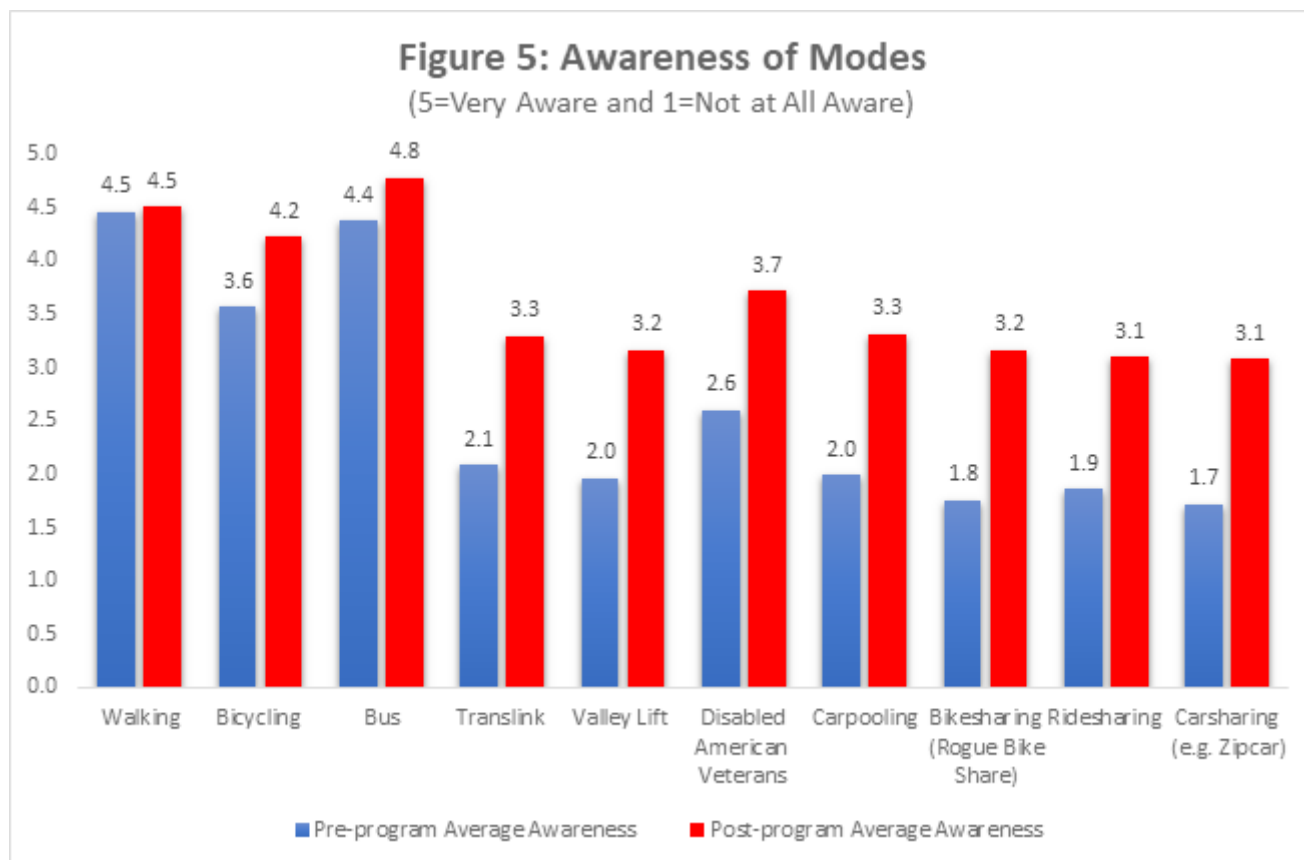
In addition to evaluating participants' access to medical appointments and work, the baseline and post-program surveys measured whether participants reported missing medical appointments, work/employment programs, or social/recreation opportunities due to a lack of transportation. The baseline survey asked respondents to consider the last 3 months when answering the question while the post-program survey asked respondents to consider the last month.

As Figure 4 shows, post-program survey respondents reported a 39 percentage point decrease of respondents reporting missing a medical appointment, a 26 percentage point decrease in respondents reporting missing work or employment programs, and a 41 percentage point decrease in respondents reporting missing social or recreational opportunities due to a lack of transportation.



Participant Awareness of Transportation Options:

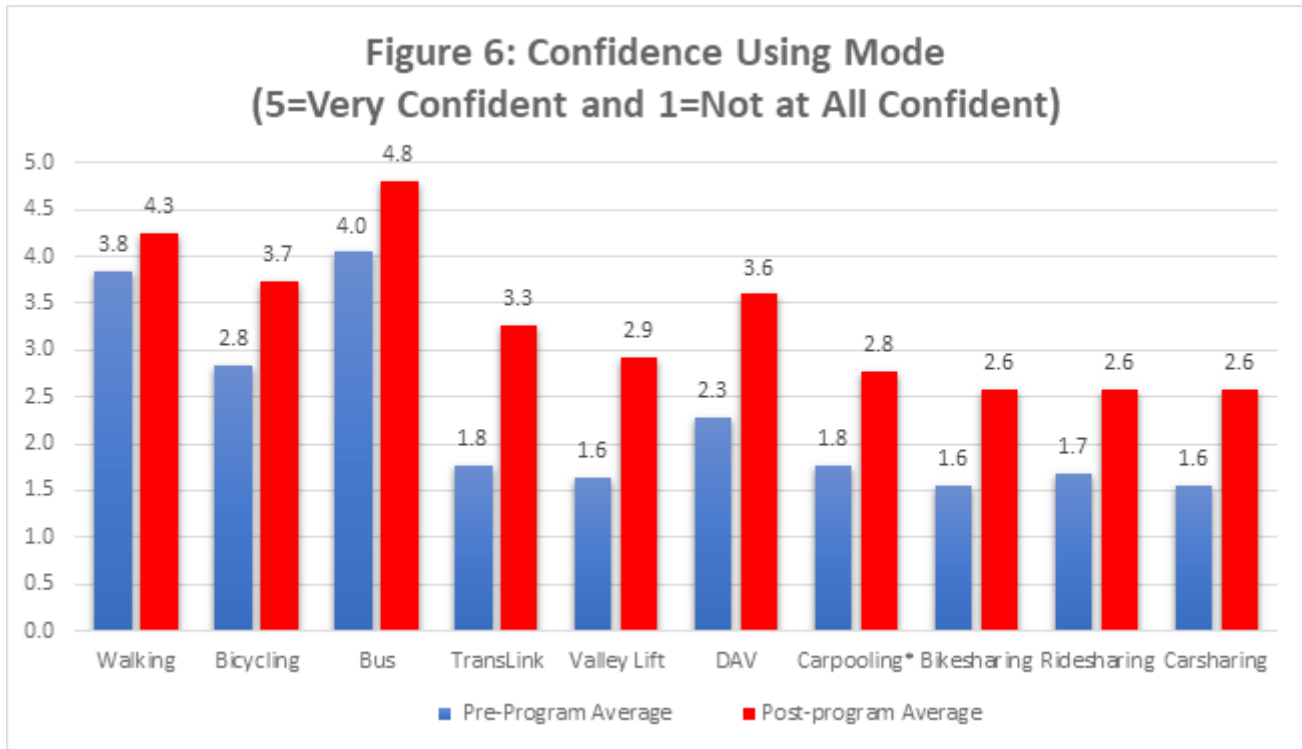
The project team evaluated changes in respondents' awareness of available transportation options over the course of the program. The baseline and post-program surveys asked respondents the following question: "How aware are you of the following transportation options in the Rogue Valley?" Participants had the option of rating their awareness for each option from a range of "very aware (5)" to "not at all aware" (1). As Figure 5 shows, the results show an increase in awareness across all transportation options.



*Survey results were averaged to determine an Awareness Rating; these ratings are shown on Figure 5 for Pre- and Post-program results. An average rating provides a clearer understanding of the average awareness for each transportation option.

Participant Confidence Using Transportation Options:

The project team evaluated changes in respondents' confidence in using available transportation options over the course of the program. The baseline and post-program surveys asked respondents the following question: "How confident are you using the following transportation options in the Rogue Valley?" Participants had the option of rating their confidence for each option from a range of "very confident (5)" to "not at all confident (1)." As Figure 6 shows, the results show an increase in confidence across all transportation options.



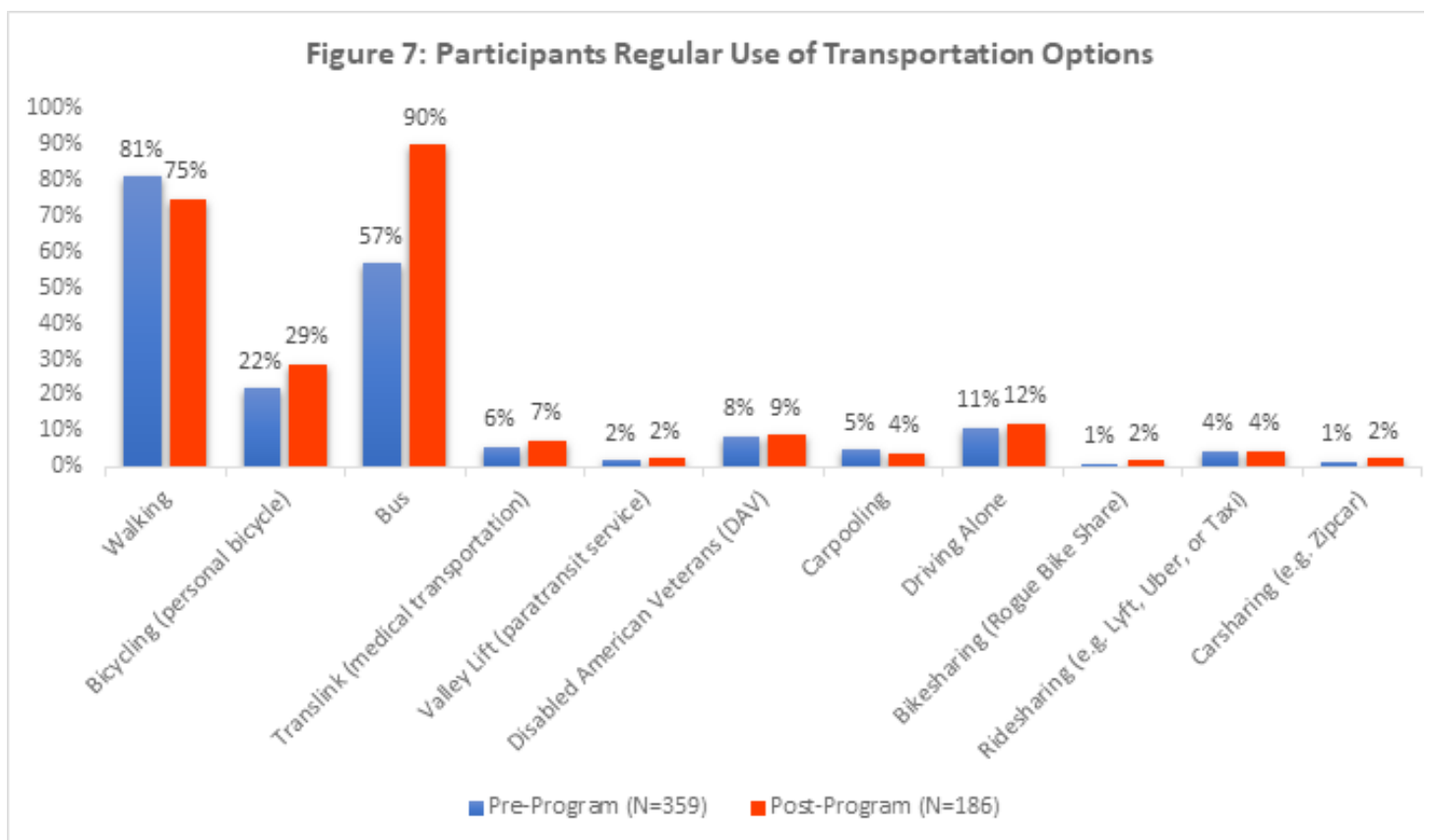
*Survey results were averaged to determine a Confidence Rating; these ratings are shown on Figure 5 for Pre- and Post-program results. An average rating provides a clearer understanding of the average awareness for each transportation option.

Participant Transportation Options Use:

The pre- and post-program survey asked respondents which transportation options they used regularly (once a month or more). Respondents could answer with the following responses for each listed transportation option:

- I have access to this option and use it regularly.
- I have access to this option but don't use it regularly.
- I don't have access to this option.

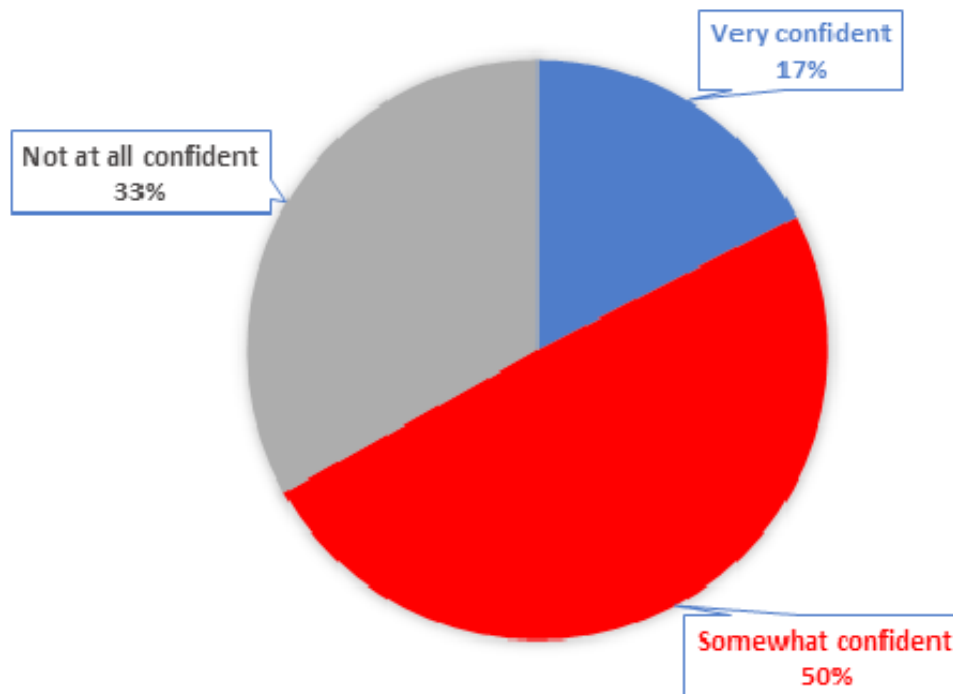
Figure 7 reports respondents who: "have access to and use the option regularly (once a month or more)". Post-program results show a 7 percentage point increase of regular bicycling usage and a 33 percentage point increase in the regular usage of the bus among respondents. Although reducing participants' drive-alone trips was not a goal of this program, it is interesting to note that there was a negligible change in respondent's regular use of this mode. This shows that over the course of the program, increased trips or access among participants, primarily relied on other transportation options such as biking and transit and not driving alone. There was a 6 percentage point decrease in the regular usage of walking over the course of the program. The project team speculates that this decrease is a result of walking trips being replaced by bus trips as well as the increased temperature and wildfire smoke present during the post-program survey.



Participants' Transit Confidence Outside of the Rogue Valley:

Through the course of the program the project team discovered that a large percentage, 45.8% of program participants, were listing the VA's Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinic (VA-SORCC) as their address or pick-up location. The Veterans Administration houses an inpatient residential program providing rehabilitative care, housing 255 residential beds. The VA does not provide information on the home residence of their inpatient program participants, but through discussions with our contacts at the VA RVTD found that this program is a mix of local participants and participants from outside the Rogue Valley. Additionally, of the 172 participants listing the SORCC as their Go Kit pick-up address, at least 11 of those participants are clients of the VA Homeless Veterans Program and listed the VA as a convenient pick-up destination. Post-program survey results show that 99% (N=204) of respondents were currently residing in the Rogue Valley at the time of the survey. In the post-program survey respondents were asked about their confidence using transit outside of the Rogue Valley, figure 8 shows that 66% of respondents are "somewhat confident" or "very confident" in using transit outside of the Rogue Valley.

Figure 8: Participants confidence using transit outside of the Rogue Valley (N=178)



PROGRAM FEEDBACK

The post-program survey asked respondents for feedback about the Go Vets program. Qualitative results from the post program survey are summarized below. As evidenced by these results, the majority of respondents thought the program was helpful, informative, and increased their connection to the community.

- 95% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the Go Vets program helped them access destinations and services by riding transit, biking, walking, and/or carpooling (Figure 9).
- 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Go Kit helped them access destinations by riding transit, biking, walking, and/or carpooling (Figure 10).
- 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Go Vets Map and Guide was useful (Figure 11).
- 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more connected to the community because of the Go Vets program (Figure 12).
- 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Go Vets activities (e.g. Honor Ride, Go Vets BBQ, Baseball Game) helped them make more trips by riding transit, biking, walking, and/or carpooling (Figure 13).
- 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Go Vets program helped them connect to community and Veteran resources (Figure 14).
- 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the personal delivery of the Go Vets and/or interaction with the Veterans representative was helpful (Figure 15).

Figure 9: The Go Vets program helped me access destinations and services by riding transit, biking, walking, and/or carpooling. (N=182)

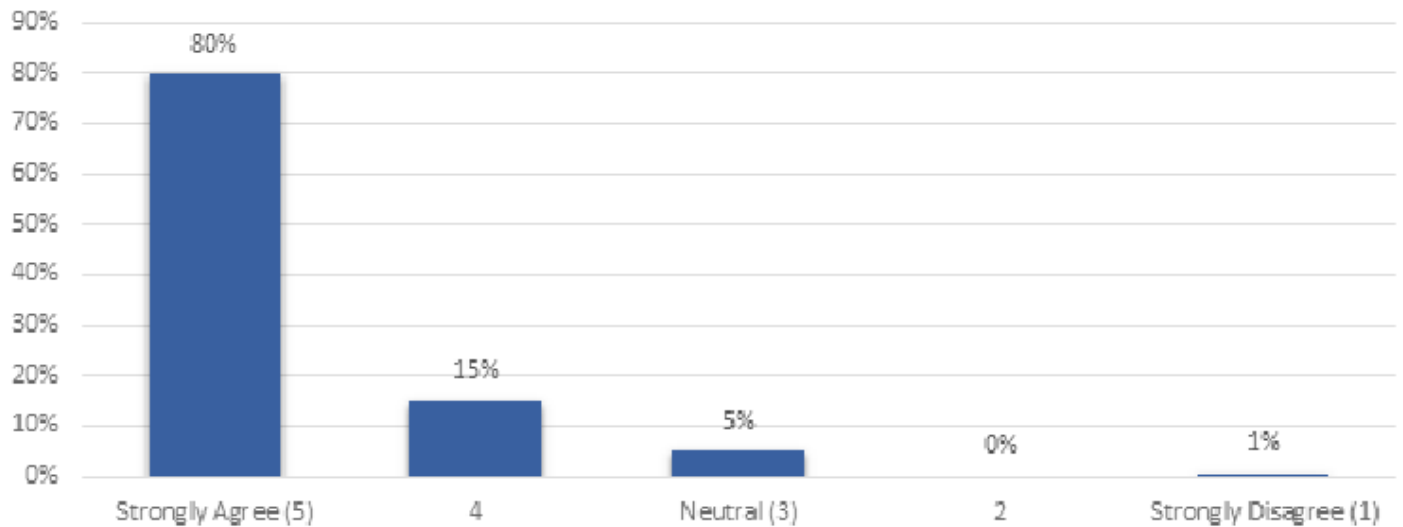


Figure 10: The customized Go Kit I received, filled with transportation information, helped me access destinations by riding transit, biking, walking, and/or carpooling. (N=183)

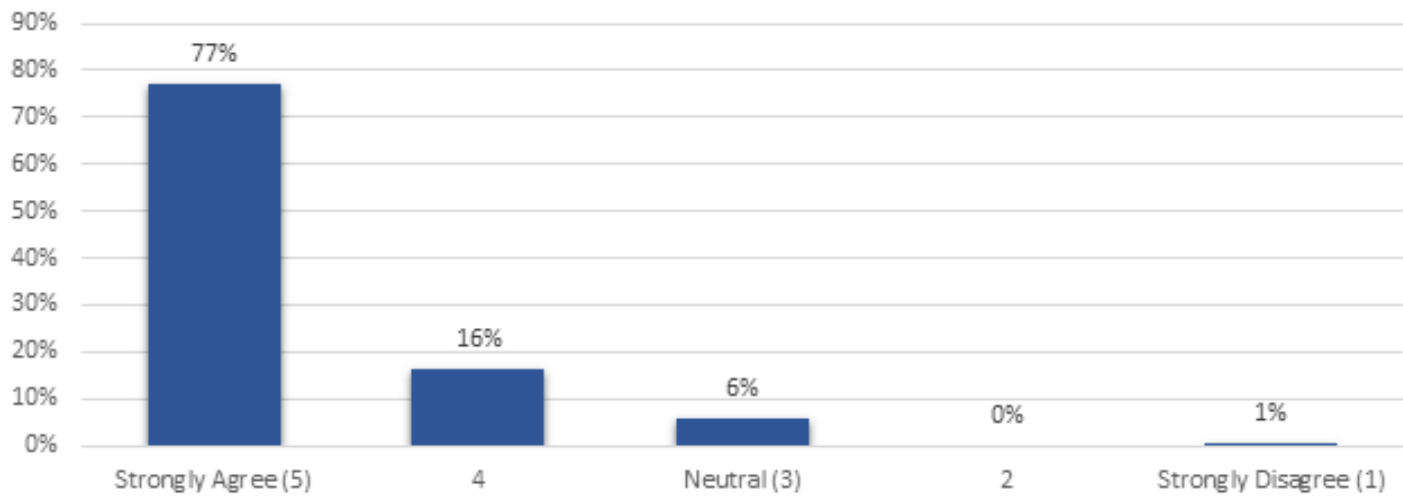


Figure 11: I found the Go Vets Map and Guide, with information on Veteran services and bus and biking routes, useful. (N=184)

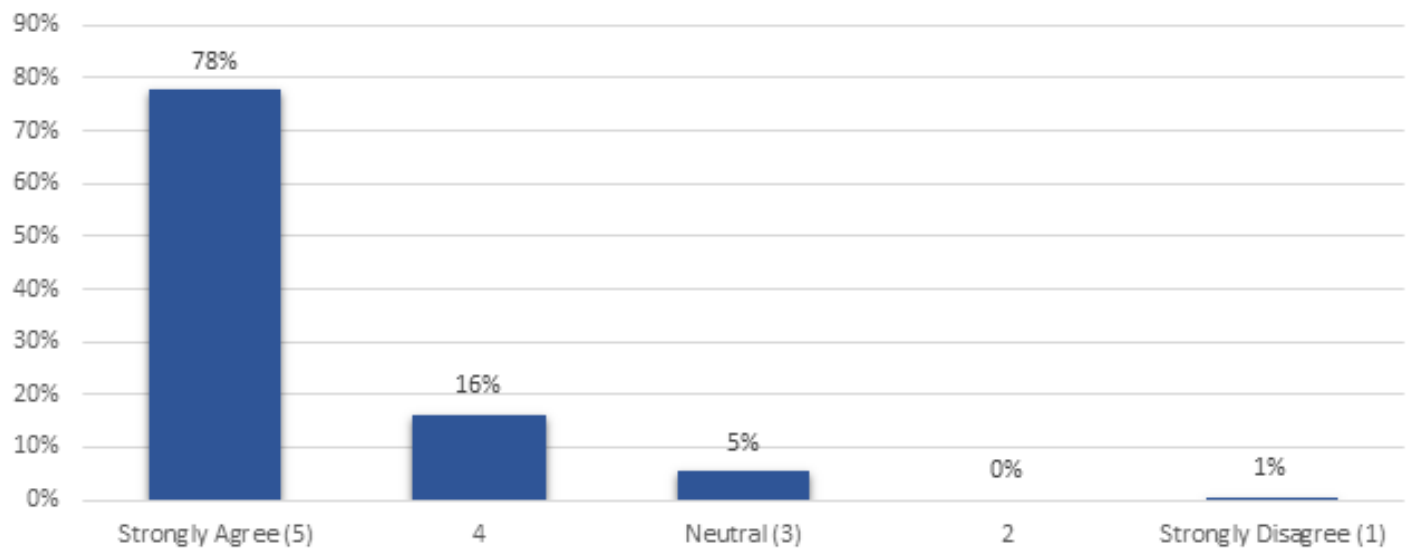


Figure 12: I feel more connected to the community because of the program. (N=182)

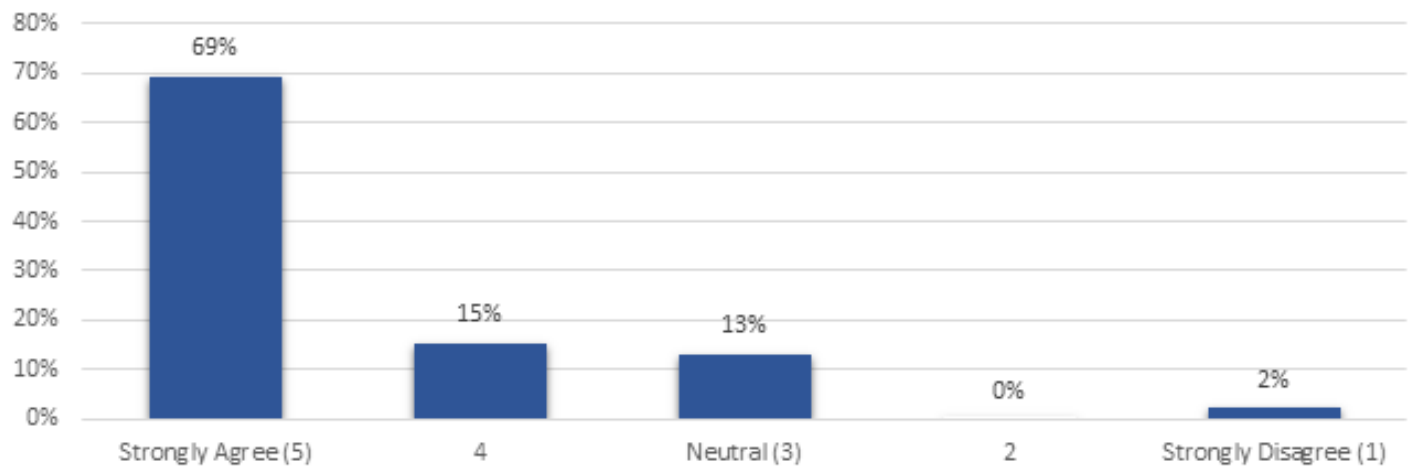


Figure 13: The Go Vets activities (e.g. Honor Ride, Go Vets BBQ, baseball game) I attended helped me make more of my trips by riding transit, biking, walking, and/or carpooling. (N=159)

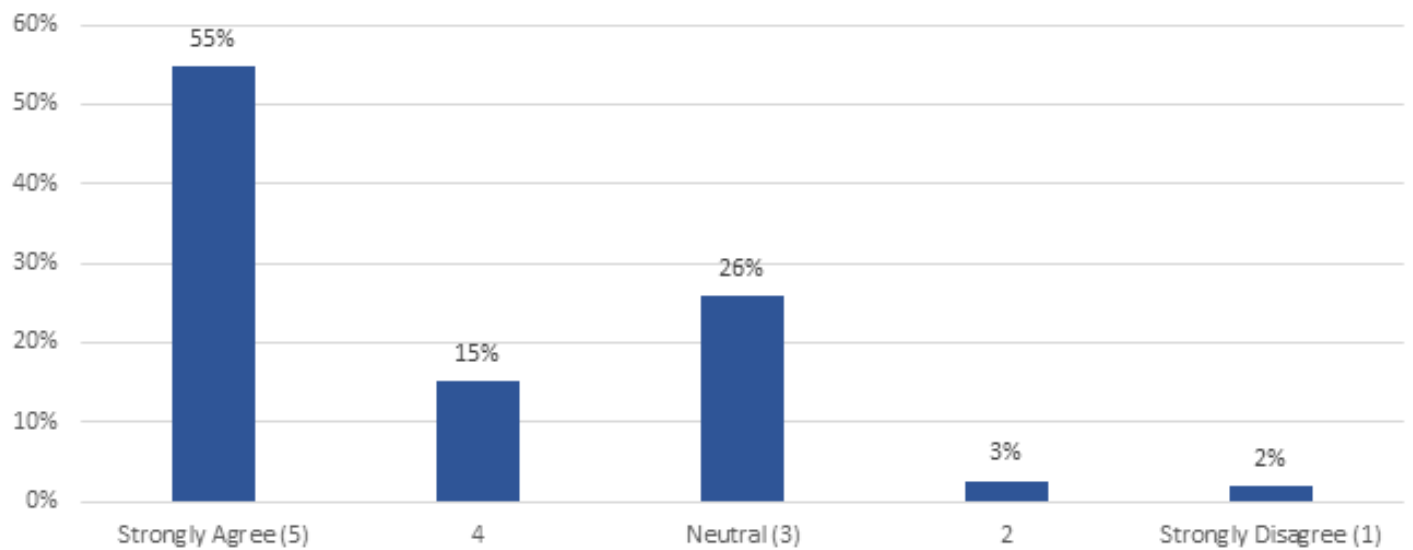


Figure 14: The Go Vets program helped me connect to community and Veteran resources (e.g. RCC, SOU, WorkSource Rogue Valley). (N=174)

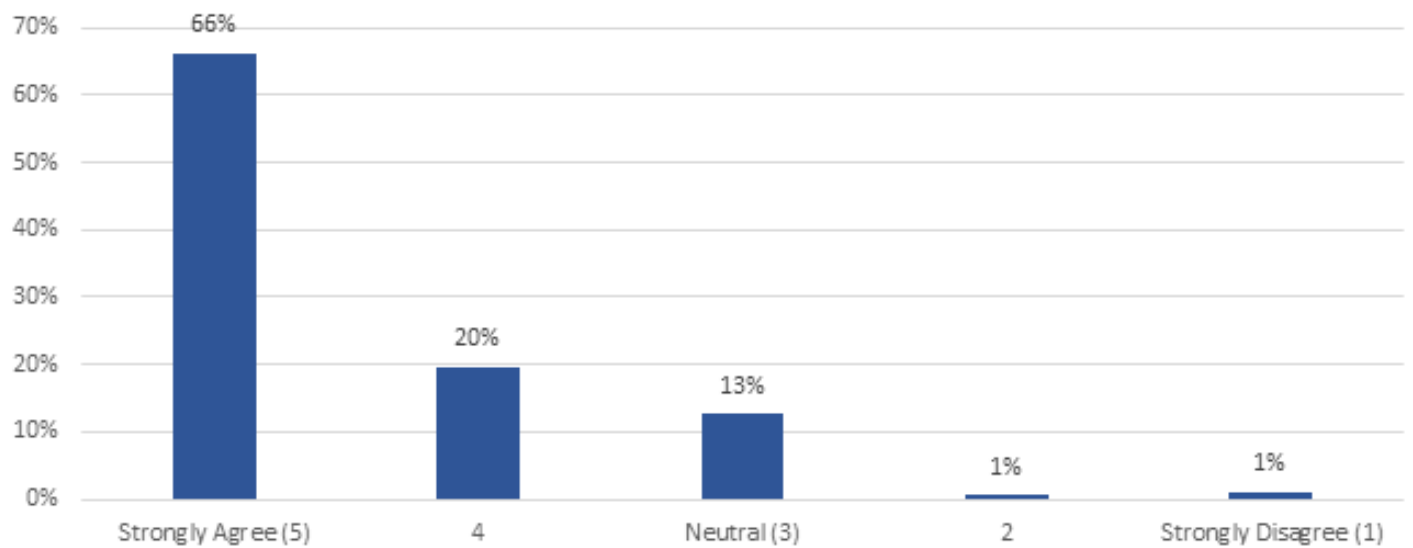
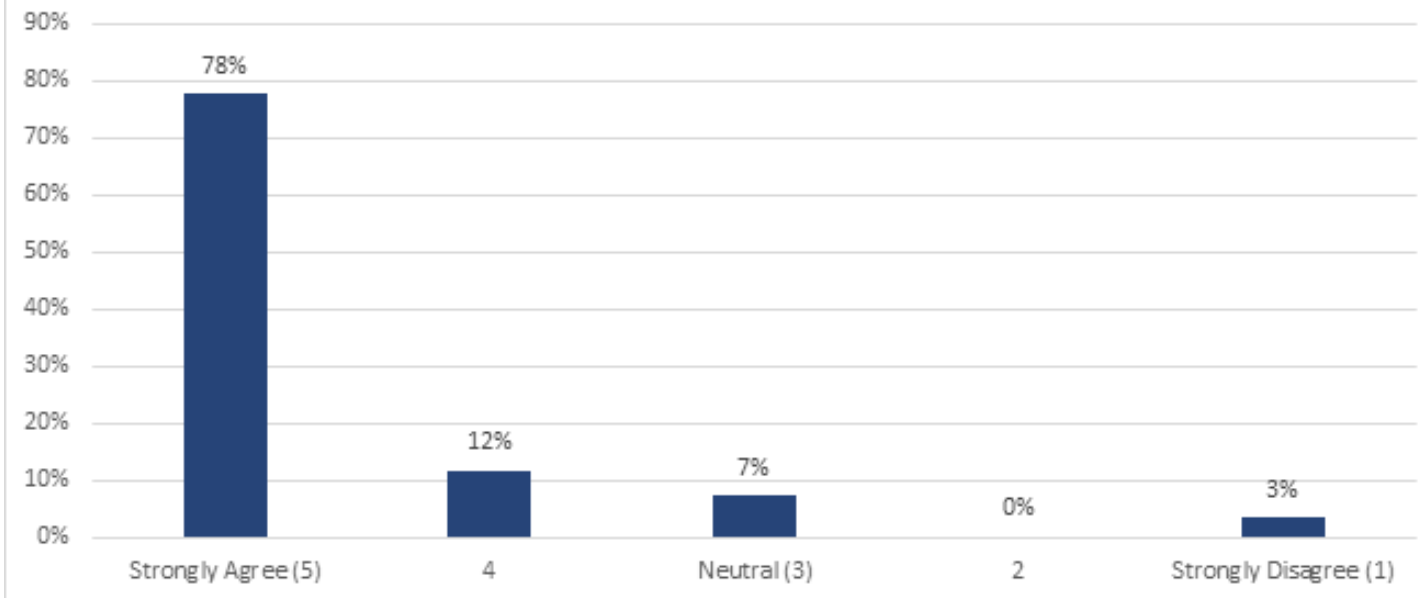


Figure 15: The personal delivery of my Go Kit and/or interaction with the Veteran representative was helpful to me. (N=179)



DEMOGRAPHICS

The following section provides information on the reported demographics of the baseline and post program survey. Results show consistency between the baseline and post-program surveys, which helps validate the survey methodology. Key findings show that most participants were males between the ages of 40-69 (84%).

Figure 16: Participant Age

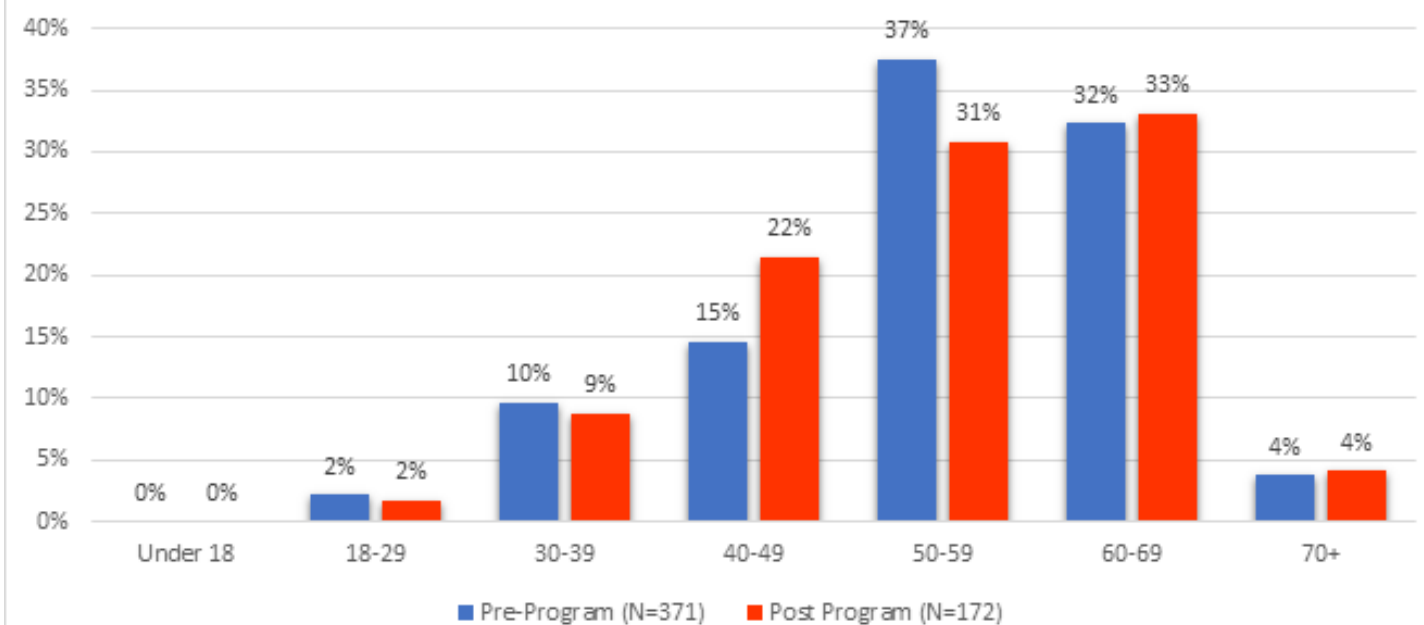


Figure 17: Participant Gender

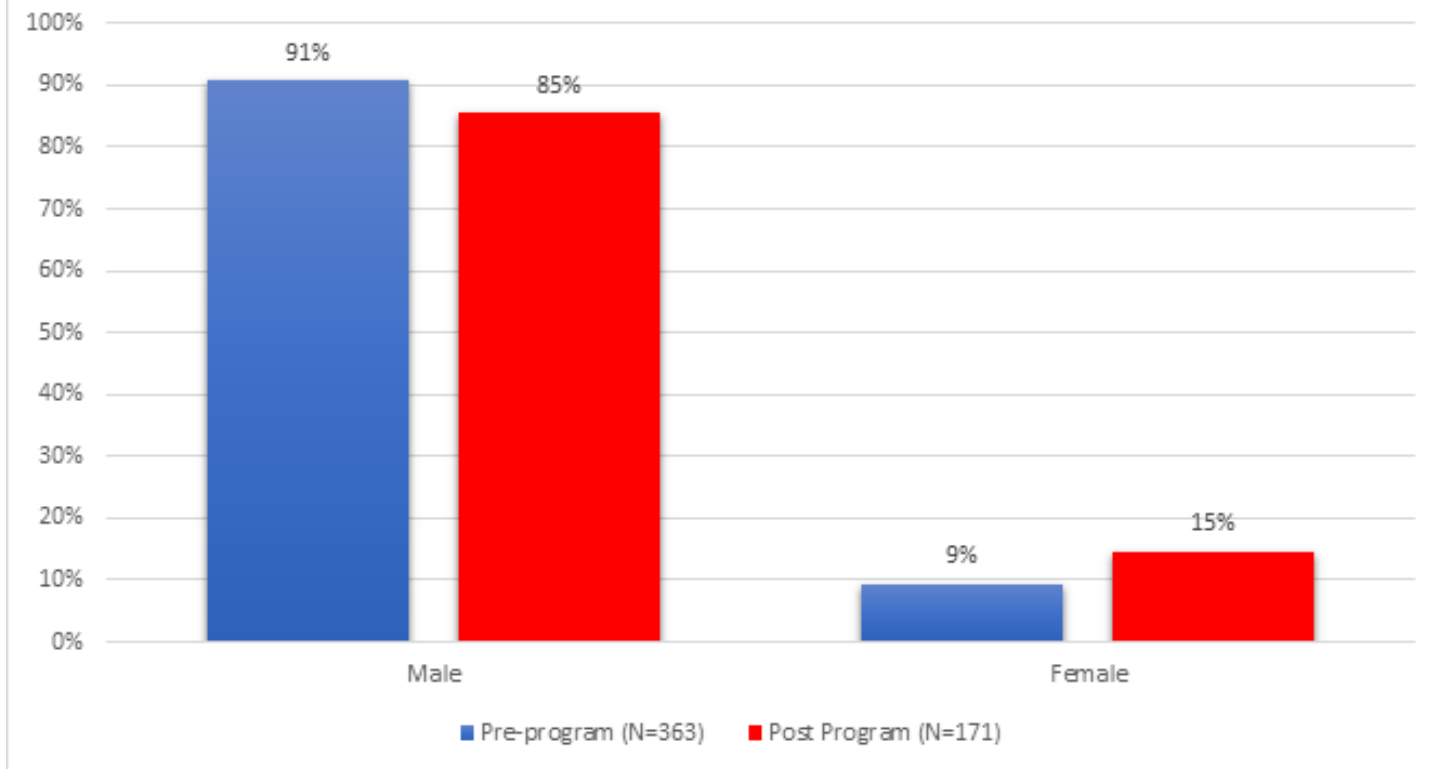
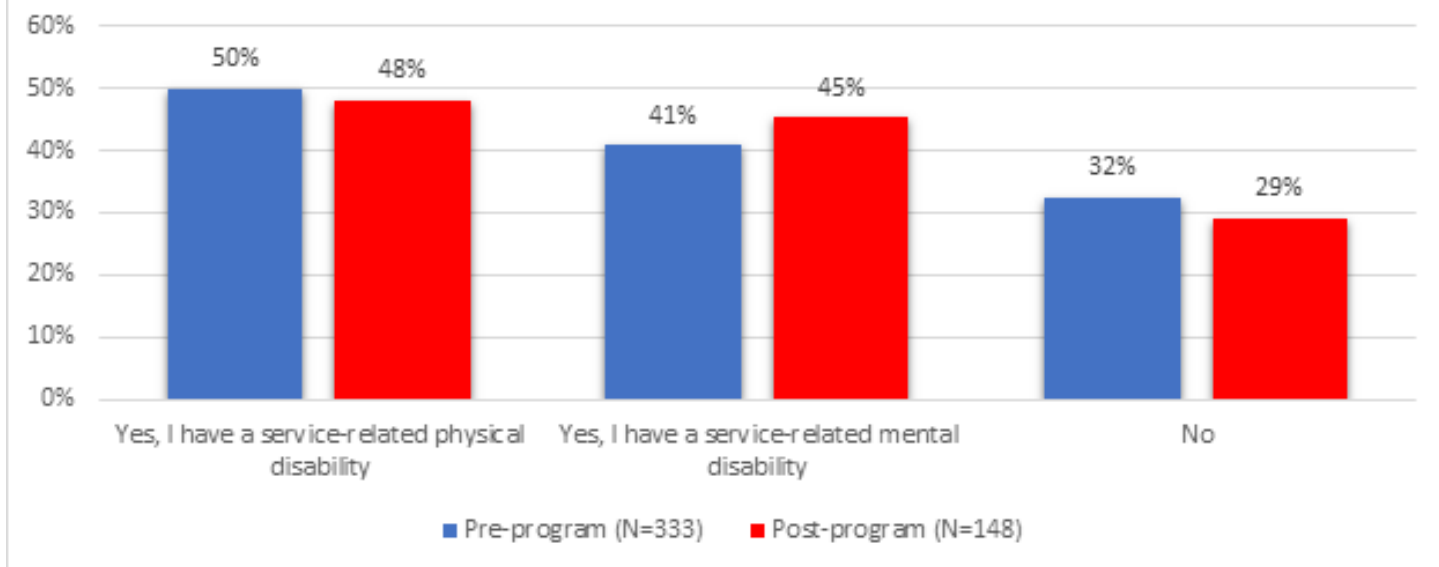


Figure 18 shows the percentage of respondents who self-reported if they had a service-related physical or mental disability. A service-related disability, as defined by the VA, is a disability by an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service. Respondents could select both service-related physical and mental disabilities.

Figure 18: Do you have a service-related physical or mental disability?



MILITARY DEMOGRAPHIC

The baseline survey included a series of questions regarding the respondents' military service, including their Military Era (Figure 19), Military Service Branch (Figure 20), and their participation in Active Combat (Figure 21). These questions help expand our understanding of the Veteran participants in the Go Vets program.

Figure 19: With which Era(s) do you identify? (N=355)

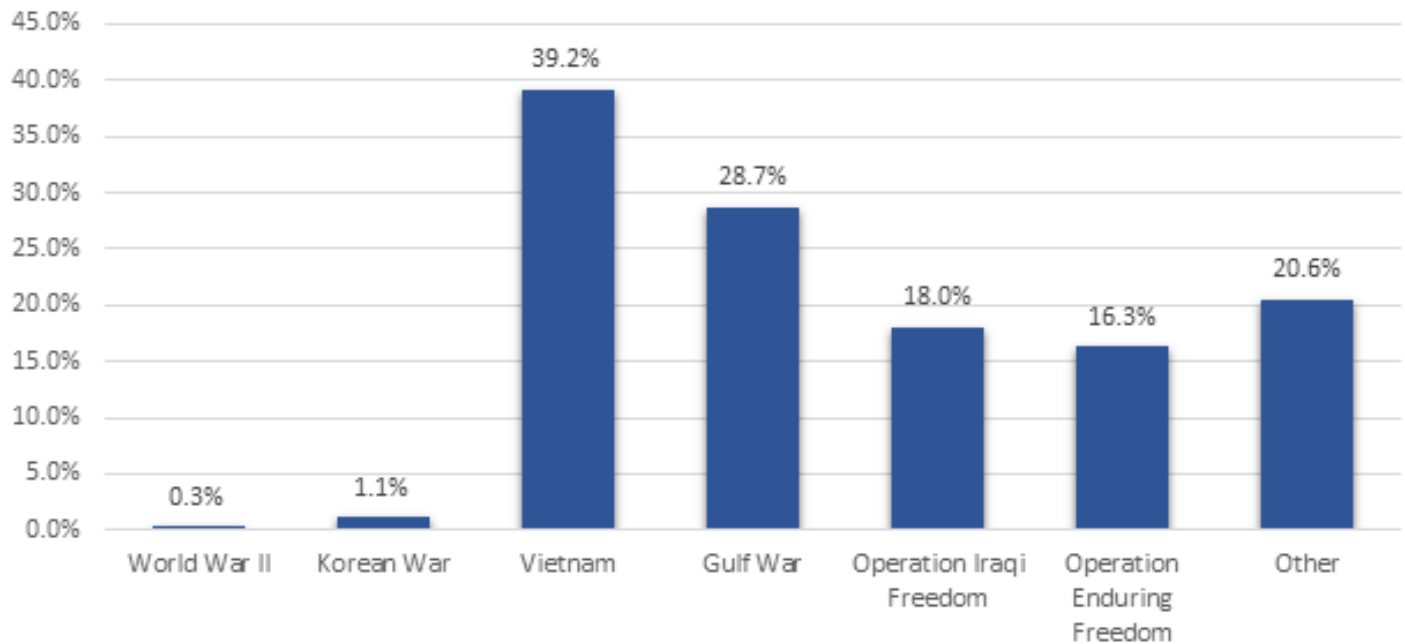
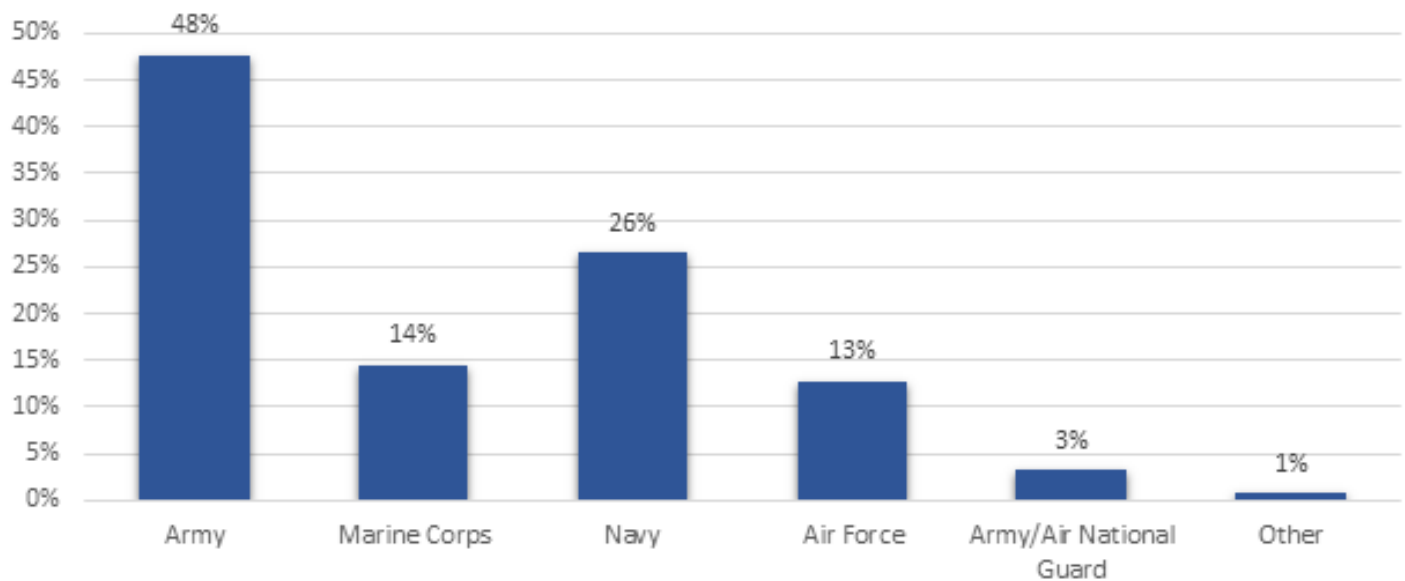
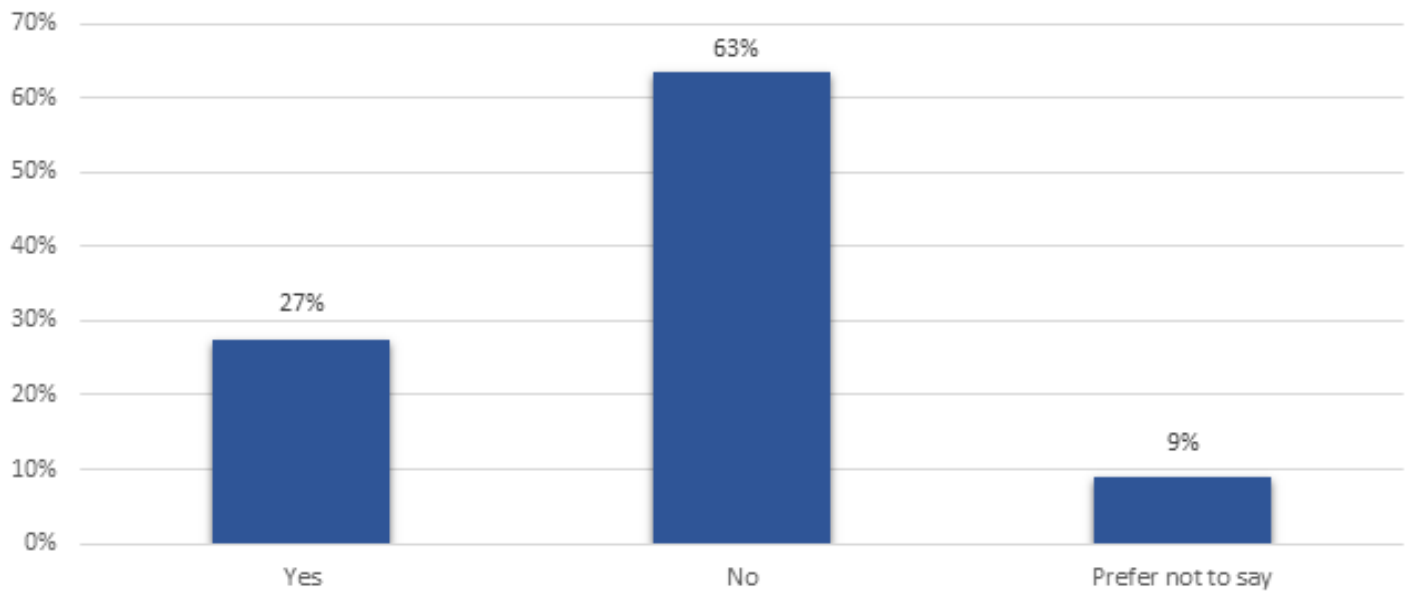


Figure 20: With which Military Branch(es) do you associate? (N=374)



**Figure 21: Did you serve in combat?
(N=375)**



LESSONS LEARNED

The Go Vets program offered a unique opportunity to learn how the fundamental mechanics of individualized marketing can be used to improve mobility for a Veteran community and learn which program elements worked well and which needed improvement. The following section highlights observations and feedback from program staff and partners.

Marketing and Communication:

- Of the 375 Veterans that signed up for the program only 276 provided a valid email address and of those, the average open rate of the emails was just 24%. Due to limited access to emails for many program participants, possibly due to computer competency or computer access, emailing could not be used as the sole communication method. While emailing was used throughout the program to promote events, updates, or share partner information it became clear to the project team that other communication methods would have to be heavily employed.
- Due to limited email access program staff relied more heavily on direct phone calling to communicate with participants. Had program staff anticipated the need for and time resources spent on direct phone calling, staff would have better been able to plan and manage their time, especially at the start of the program. Also, program participants appreciated and many requested the personal communication of phone calling.
- Veterans became some of the best program ambassadors, once staff developed relationships with Veteran participants they helped spread the word to other Veterans that may not have otherwise heard about or participated in the program. Earned media and personal communication was key to the program success.

Events:

- Having a program calendar of events, with pre-planned major program and partner events, included in the Go Kit would have helped with promotion and increased event participation.

Working with Veterans:

- Motivational Interviewing was an effective way for getting to know participants and learn more about their needs. Asking open ended questions allowed Veterans to open-up and provide information on what service they might need and what transportation barriers they are facing. This gave program staff opportunities to provide helpful information and resources. Veterans are a hard to reach audience and can be reticent to share their needs or ask for help, developing relationships and building trust was key.
- Knowledge not only of transportation options but also of program partner resources was important when working with participants. Program staff not only received questions about transportation, but also about where a participant could access a service. It was important that staff knew the services program partners provided i.e. housing assistance, mental health assistance, Veterans reintegration services etc.

Go Kit Materials:

- Only 17% of participants selected the Poncho vs 73% selecting the Water Bottle. The poncho should have been replaced with another tool. The program timing may also have played a role in this order disparity with late spring and summer months having high temperatures in Southern Oregon.
- The Go Vets Map and Guide was very popular among both participants and program partners. It is a resource that RVTD will have use long after the end of the program.

Fulfillment and Deliveries:

- Utilizing pre-defined pick-up locations at partner programs was appreciated by program participants, it allowed for participants that may be housing insecure an easy and convenient pick-up location. The partner programs also appreciated being able to be part of the kit delivery process as it gave them more opportunity to interact with Veterans and learn about their transportation barriers.



Fulfillment center during kit packing.

CONCLUSION

The Go Vets program was highly effective at engaging Veterans and accomplishing the program goals of improving mobility and access to medical appointments, work, social and recreational opportunities and increasing awareness and confidence using transportation options. During the program 375 Veterans participated by ordering a Go Kit. The project team organized 5 custom events and participated in 4 partner events, reaching more than 400 Veterans during the program.

Program results revealed that two in three post-program survey respondents (66%) reported that they are able to access medical appointments “very well.” **This was a 33 percentage point increase from the pre-program survey.** Likewise, more than one in four post-program survey respondents (28%) reported that they are able to access work “very well.” **This was a 28 percentage point increase from the pre-program survey.** These results indicate respondents’ access to work and medical appointments increased during the program.

Post-program survey respondents reported a **39 percentage point decrease in missed medical appointments, a 26 percentage point decrease in missed work/employment programs, and a 41 percentage point decrease in missed social or recreational opportunities** due to a lack of transportation. Additionally, Veterans reported **increasing their regular use (once a month or more) of bicycling and riding the bus by 7% and 33%, respectively.** Awareness and confidence using transportation options increased across all transportation options throughout the course of the program.

Feedback from participants indicated that the program was effective at connecting them to the community and Veteran services. 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more connected to the community because of the Go Vets program. 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the personal delivery of the Go Kit and interaction with the Veterans representative was helpful. 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Go Vets program helped them access destinations and services by riding transit, biking, walking, and/or carpooling.

An added benefit of the Go Vets program is the strong relationships RVTD built with program partners and the increased capacity the program developed both at RVTD and with partners. Through the course of the program RVTD increased capacity and developed tools to better reach and serve the Veteran community. Program partners also increased their capacity to connect and educate their Veteran clients on local transportation options. The project team anticipates the effects of this program at RVTD and program partners will have a lasting impact, allowing our community to better serve our Veterans.

PARTICIPANT QUOTES

Many participants chose to share personal comments and stories about the value of the program through the participant survey and at events. Below are some representative quotes.

"It helped me get out and back into the community, as well as make some new friends. Thankful for the recognition of what us vets did."

"The Go Vets pass has enabled me to get out of my home and helped me greatly with my depression. Thank you, this program has changed my world."

The Go Vets Programs really surprised me with the speed of receiving the Package, literally the next day! The Veteran that delivered to me was very courteous. I was able to finally get my much-needed surgery scheduled by receiving the touch pass... you're the best!

"A wonderful program that has lifted the head of many veterans."

"I want to thank you very much for all your help. Your kit and the bus pass is currently helping me tremendously to get to and from unemployment office and job opportunities while I seek work. Thank you sincerely"

"It has helped me gain my independence, find work, visit my medical appointments, and visit with friends. The service is very good."

"Thank you for this program without it I would have difficulties accessing my appointments."

"Love the fact that my Go Vets package was hand delivered. Like the personal touch. I also think this program is so valuable to Vets. It allows them freedoms they may not get otherwise. Kudos to whomever started Go Vets!!"

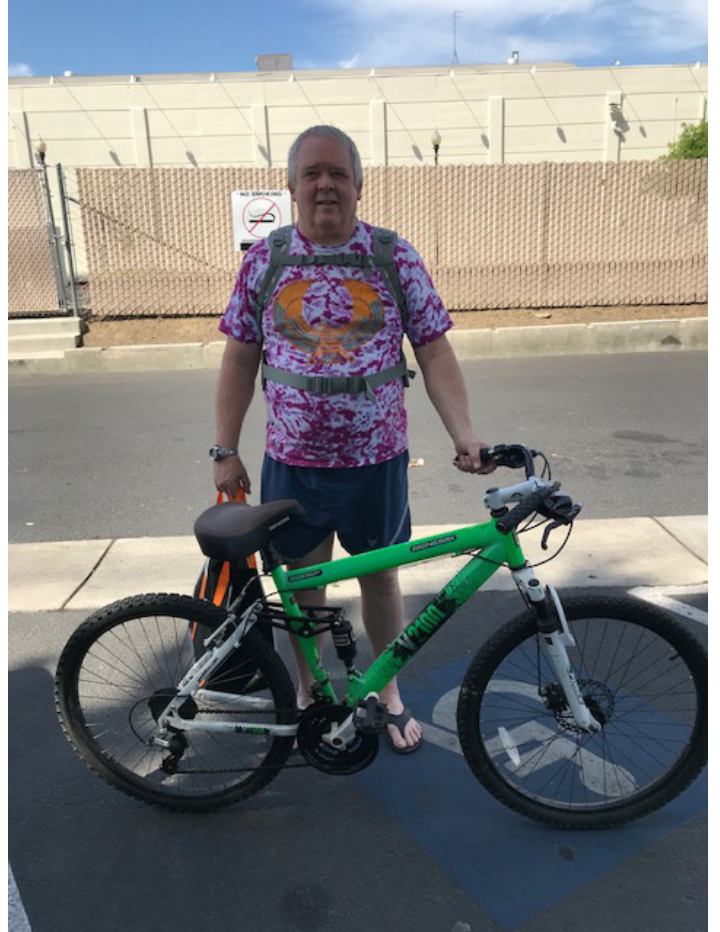
"This program has been very helpful to me. I am grateful for it, and wish to thank everyone involved. Without it I could not find work."

"The Go Vets program helped me get out in the community because I don't have a vehicle. Brian was real cool to talk to being a Veteran and him a part of the Armed Services I can identify, I was going through a new and demanding part of my life mentally and physically. It was made much easier that I had all these resources to help me cope and have fun and feel appreciated"

"This is an excellent transitional tool for us Vets. I know I appreciate the caring attitude shown by the people at the Go Vets program. It's amazing how a few caring people can help so many Vets not feeling trapped. Go Vets program has made it possible for me to get around. This has been a life changing experience. Thank you so much for your caring."



RVTD staff fixing bike for Pedals for Patriots program.



Veteran receives a refurbished bike from Pedals for patriots program



View of the Rogue baseball game from Go Vets event.



Veterans at the Third Tuesday event.

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GO VETS

