

## Northwest Connecticut Independent Transportation Network Torrington, Connecticut

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### Description

Recent studies and polls have shown that access to safe and convenient transportation remains a very high priority with older Americans. This is a particular issue in rural areas where the places seniors live are often separated from the places they need and want to go by long distances and transit services are limited. Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI) was contracted by the Sullivan Senior Center in the City of Torrington, CT, to create a plan for an Independent Rural Transportation System (IRTS), primarily for elderly residents living in the Litchfield Hills Region of Connecticut. The rural character of the Litchfield Hills area with its sparse and dispersed population presents particular transportation challenges for the region's senior citizens, who wish to remain independent. An IRTS will help bridge the gaps in existing services to help these senior citizens remain active by providing trips to visit with family and friends, to their place of worship, for shopping, for medical appointments, and anywhere else they would like to go.

FHI developed a pilot program to serve a 10-town area of the Litchfield Hills region with a model for the IRTS, identifying gaps in existing services and other challenges and opportunities. Our program plan offers recommendations on how the system can be organized, managed, and funded. The long-term goal is to expand the system, once well established, to serve all of northwestern Connecticut. Another key component of the IRTS program will be engaging the community in the system, by enlisting volunteers (both drivers and organizers) and through public outreach and support from local media. To engage a broader cross section of the community, FHI conducted stakeholder interviews and convened a Regional Roundtable, which gained invaluable insights from participants and fostered understanding of and support for the IRTS concept.

### Client

Sullivan Senior Center, Torrington, Connecticut

