



Contact: Kim Brandon
Phone: 719-330-9380
Email: kimmybrandon1@yahoo.com
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Envida Develops Transportation Program to Provide Mental Health Rides to Individuals Across Colorado Springs in Crisis due to COVID-19

One of the first programs in the US that connects individuals suffering with mental illness crises and addictions to mental health professionals and facilities through a unique transportation program

(Colorado Springs, Colo. – September 10, 2020) Transportation obstacles have long been identified as barriers for individuals to receive mental health support which, according to the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention study](#), has seen a marked increase since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Envida](#), provides home care and transportation to those in need in El Paso and Teller counties, realized that individuals' necessary mental health care needs weren't being met, so they implemented a program that specifically addresses transportation to get individuals to and from their mental health appointments. These appointments help address substance abuse, anxiety, isolation and depression — all conditions known to be aggravated by COVID-19 and often leading to crisis.

What makes Envida's program unique is:

- One of the first programs in the US that connects individuals suffering with mental illness crises and addictions to mental health professionals and facilities through a unique transportation program.
- Envida utilizes state of the art software that allows individuals to manage their mental health appointments with confidence and confidentiality, while building their independence.
- Envida's drivers are specially trained in mental health response to foster safe and trusting relationships with riders.

Funded primarily through grants from the [Federal Transit Administration](#), [Colorado Community Health Alliance](#) and the [National Center for Mobility Management](#), Envida's mental health transportation program has recently finished its test phase and is currently implementing its pilot program throughout El Paso and Teller counties in Colorado. The goal is for Envida's program to be a replicable model for cities to implement throughout the U.S.

“Envida first rolled out the test program last year, and we had an amazing response,” said Gail Nehls, Envida’s Chief Executive Officer. “Starting in November we had 87 rides scheduled —by February we had over 400 rides scheduled. Then the pandemic hit, and telehealth appointments became necessary. However, telehealth does not address individuals in crisis, so we’ve pivoted to providing rides for individuals experiencing mental health crises and have seen our ridership increase over 4 fold,” Nehls continued. “At the end of the day, we want to be sure to give our clients greater access to mental health. We want to save lives.”

About Envida: Envida supports independent living by providing transportation and home health care services to individuals with disabilities, older adults and those experiencing financial challenges throughout El Paso County. Envida’s mission is to promote access and support independent living with dignity.

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