

# CARFit

## SIX STEPS TO GET STARTED IN NORTH CAROLINA



 **NC SeniorDriver.org**  
Promoting safety for all drivers

**CARFit**   
Helping Mature Drivers Find Their Safest Fit

**AARP**

**ATA**  
American  
Occupational Therapy  
Association

**AAA**

# Get Started with CarFit in NC

Welcome to CarFit – a program designed to enhance the safety and comfort of older drivers. This guide will provide you with an overview of how to successfully implement CarFit sessions in your organization and community.

The beauty of CarFit lies in its flexibility. There is no “right” way to get started with CarFit – you can start small and tailor the program to fit the unique needs of your organization and community.

Use these six steps as a roadmap to getting started.

1. Choose a format
2. Build your CarFit team
3. Prepare for participants
4. Choose a safe location
5. Plan effective outreach
6. Establish local partnerships



# Step 1: Choose a Format

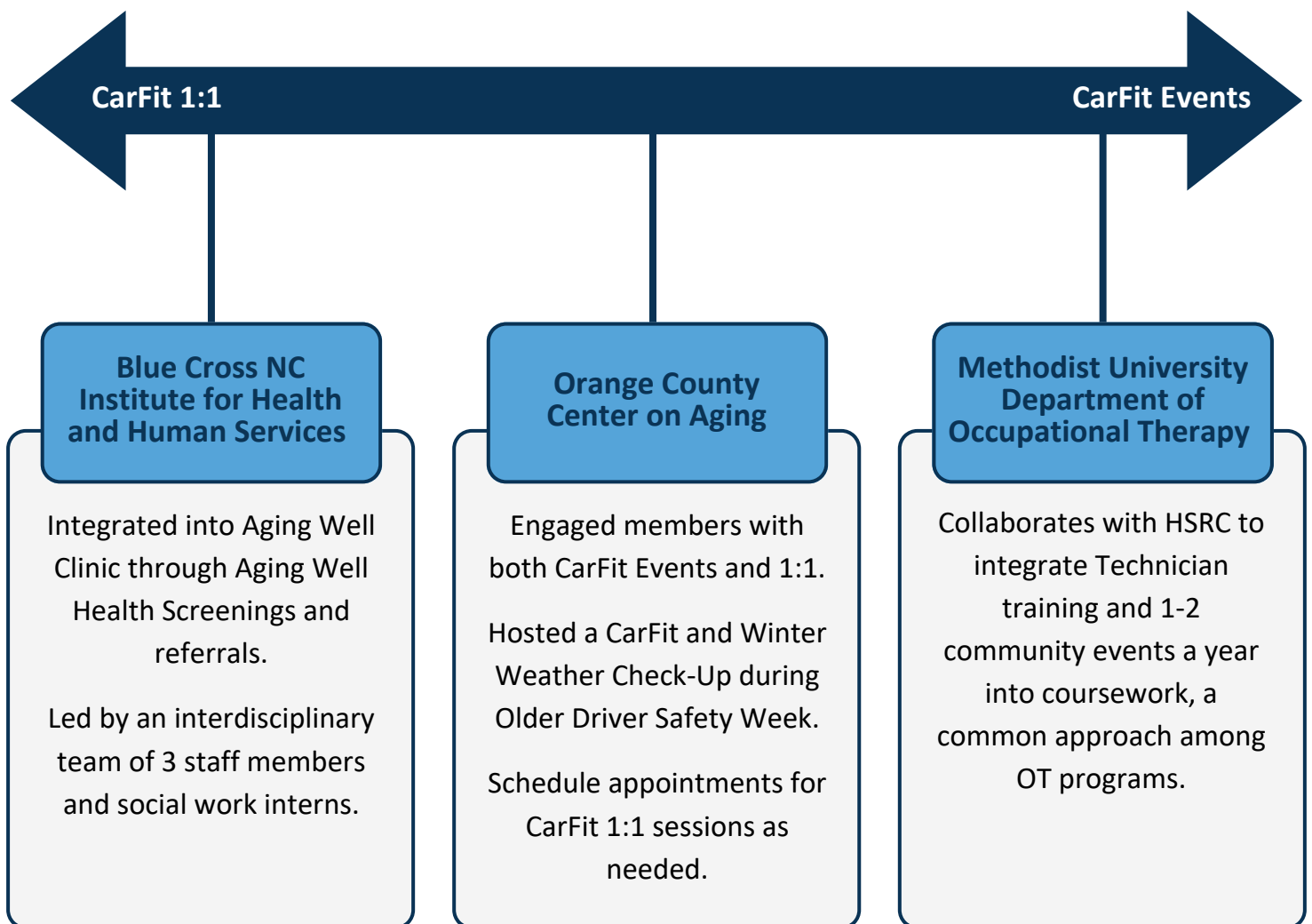
During a CarFit session, trained volunteers go through a 12-point checklist, guiding drivers through simple changes that can make a big difference for their driving experience.

Sessions are done in-person, either as an Event or 1:1. Either option can be scaled in a way that works best for your organization and community. While the checklist stays the same, there are some differences between the two formats.

	CarFit Event	CarFit 1:1
<b>Format</b>	Single day, lasting around 2-4 hours	On-demand (appointments and/or walk-in)
<b>Scheduling</b>	Set event time	Flexible scheduling
<b>Space Needed</b>	Large section of the parking lot away from traffic with room for 3 stations (Check-In, Check-Up, Check Out)	2-3 parking spaces to open doors and walk around the vehicle
<b>Number of Attendees</b>	Flexible in size	1
<b>Staff Required</b>	5+	1-2 (second volunteer is helpful for mirror checks)
<b>Who can complete CarFit checks</b>	Technicians or Coordinator 1:1	Coordinator 1:1
<b>Occupational Therapist</b>	Required at event for final review	Optional, refer as needed
<b>Event Coordinator</b>	Required	Optional

When bringing CarFit to your community, you can use 1:1 sessions, events, or a blend of both. Explore various approaches along the spectrum to find the right fit for your community.

Across North Carolina, different organizations have found their place along the spectrum to bring CarFit to their communities. These programs offer valuable insights to guide you as you begin your own CarFit journey.



# Step 2: Build Your CarFit Team

Building a skilled and dedicated team is the foundation of a successful CarFit program. The staffing requirements and necessary training vary based on the chosen format and size of your CarFit program.

Technicians or Coordinator 1:1s will serve as the primary educators during CarFit sessions, but various roles contribute to the overall success. Ensure everyone knows their roles and responsibilities before the event. Ideally, each role should be performed by a different person.

## Roles at an Event:

- Event Coordinator: Plans and runs the event, addressing questions from volunteers and participants.
- Check-In: Untrained volunteer or tech/coordinator to explain the process, provide waiver and checklist, and direct to the check-up station.
- Check-Up: Each check-up station will need a Technician or Coordinator 1:1, assisted by an untrained volunteer or secondary tech/coordinator for mirror checks.
- Check-Out: Occupational Therapist for the final review.
- Traffic Control: Depending on the size of the event and location, you might want a law enforcement official to direct traffic.

## Roles at a 1:1 Session:

- Coordinator 1:1: Completes the checklist and educates the participant.
- Secondary Support: Untrained volunteer or secondary tech/coordinator for mirror checks.

While not required at a CarFit 1:1 session, having an experienced Event Coordinator or Coordinator 1:1 present can offer assistance to new Coordinator 1:1s, helping them build confidence to work independently. Additionally, seasoned Event Coordinators or Coordinator 1:1s could be available for virtual support through text or video calls during sessions.

The UNC Highway Safety Research Center Event Coordinators are ready to offer assistance before or during your CarFit sessions. For more information, please contact [info@ncseniordriver.org](mailto:info@ncseniordriver.org).

To build your CarFit team:

- Select staff or volunteers for your CarFit program and ensure they undergo the necessary training.
- While students and volunteers can serve valuable roles in your CarFit program, it is essential to have a dedicated staff member who can consistently lead your program to ensure sustainability.
- An Event Coordinator and an Occupational Therapist are required for CarFit Events. While having an Event Coordinator or Occupational Therapist at your organization is beneficial, it is not a requirement. Event Coordinators at HSRC can assist with events across the state.

To schedule a training or for more information, reach out to the UNC Highway Safety Research Center Event Coordinators at [info@ncseniordriver.org](mailto:info@ncseniordriver.org).



# Step 3: Prepare for Participants

Preparing for your CarFit sessions will ensure a smooth and efficient experience for both staff and participants. When preparing to host a CarFit session, consider:

- **Scheduling System:** Implement an easy-to-use scheduling system tailored to your audience, such as phone reservations, email bookings, in-person sign-up sheets, or online scheduling tools.
- **Weather:** The older driver will have their car off and will be sitting without temperature control for 30-45 minutes. Plan ahead by having things like tents, fans, heaters, or water during the sessions. You can also schedule your program during milder weather conditions to ensure the comfort of the participants.

## Materials needed for a CarFit session

- Checklists
- Waivers
- Rulers
- Clipboards
- Pens or pencils
- Adaptive equipment handout or samples
- Resource bag with educational materials and local contacts - Avoid overloading; choose information relevant to the participant (mirrors, tires, adaptive devices).

## Other useful materials

- Participant data sheets
- Traffic cones
- Event signage
- Chalk or rope for marking lanes
- Tents
- Fans
- Heaters
- Water
- Hand sanitizer

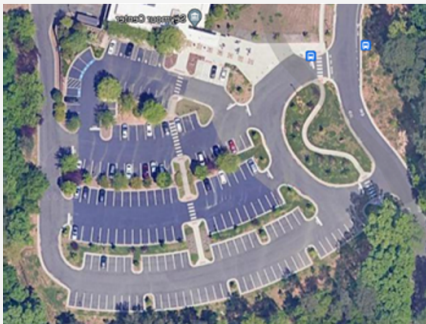
## Step 4: Choose a Safe Location

Safety is the top priority for both volunteers and participants in CarFit sessions. When choosing a location, consider:

- Choose easily accessible locations; avoid left turns across multiple lanes, high-speed, or busy roads.
- While conducting a session in a visible area can generate interest in CarFit, it's important to consider that participants may feel uncomfortable with onlookers.
- Locations with enclosed or covered areas (like Fire station bays) are excellent for unpredictable North Carolina weather conditions. Choose well-lit options, particularly for parking garages or decks, to accommodate age-related vision changes.
- CarFit Events require a larger section of a parking lot (remembering accessibility, traffic flow, and privacy). If your facility lacks space, collaborate with other organizations like schools, retirement communities, hospitals, faith-based groups, or community centers.
- For events, ensure the checking area is separate from routine traffic, with separate areas for entering and exiting. Participants should be able to drive forward from station to station without reversing or turning around.

Explore how these considerations play out in the two real-world examples below:

### Seymour Center



- Familiar location for members.
- Room for 3 stations and room to drive forward from one to the next.
- Separate areas to enter and exit.
- Good option for Events and 1:1.

### UNC HSRC



- Quiet, low-traffic area great for 1:1 sessions.
- One narrow entrance/exit, at an event drivers would have to do a three-point turn to exit.
- Not enough room for 3 stations.



# Step 5: Plan Effective Outreach

Developing a strategic outreach plan is essential for the success of CarFit sessions. To ensure a comprehensive strategy:

- Clearly define your target audience and tailor your outreach strategy accordingly.
- Use a variety of channels, including newsletters, community bulletin boards, local media outlets, and social media.
  - For Larger Events: Leverage local media outlets (TV, radio, print media) for broader reach.
  - For Smaller Events: Rely on word-of-mouth, internal organization channels, and signs.
- Encourage word-of-mouth promotion by delivering positive and impactful experiences during CarFit sessions.
- Design and distribute eye-catching promotional materials to capture attention. Incorporate the CarFit logo in materials.

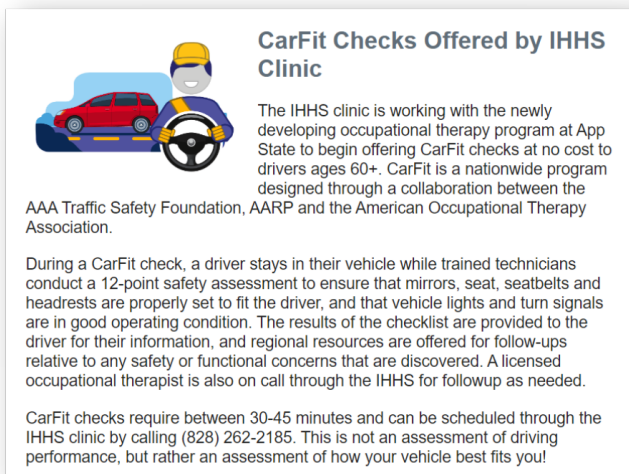
## North Carolina CarFit Resources

[Customizable Event Flyer](#)

[Customizable 1:1 Appointments Flyer](#)

## National CarFit Resources

Available through the volunteer portal on [CarFit website](#).



**CarFit Checks Offered by IHHS Clinic**

The IHHS clinic is working with the newly developing occupational therapy program at App State to begin offering CarFit checks at no cost to drivers ages 60+. CarFit is a nationwide program designed through a collaboration between the AAA Traffic Safety Foundation, AARP and the American Occupational Therapy Association.

During a CarFit check, a driver stays in their vehicle while trained technicians conduct a 12-point safety assessment to ensure that mirrors, seat, seatbelts and headrests are properly set to fit the driver, and that vehicle lights and turn signals are in good operating condition. The results of the checklist are provided to the driver for their information, and regional resources are offered for follow-ups relative to any safety or functional concerns that are discovered. A licensed occupational therapist is also on call through the IHHS for followup as needed.

CarFit checks require between 30-45 minutes and can be scheduled through the IHHS clinic by calling (828) 262-2185. This is not an assessment of driving performance, but rather an assessment of how your vehicle best fits you!



**DISCOVER SAFER, MORE COMFORTABLE DRIVING WITH CARFIT!**

Have you ever found it hard to see over your steering wheel, reach your gas and brake pedals, or check your blind spots while driving?

Join us to find your perfect fit in your car.

Harris Teeter  
1800 MLK Jr. Blvd, Chapel Hill

Wednesday, September 20th  
11-1pm

For more information, contact:  
info@ncseniordriver.org

**CARFIT**  **NC SeniorDriver.org**  
Promoting safety for all drivers

AARP  

# Step 6: Establish Local Partnerships

Foster partnerships with local community organizations to enhance outreach efforts and extend the program's reach to a broader demographic of older drivers.

## Intergenerational Events

The NC Senior Driver Information Center CarFit team partnered with the Chapel Hill Fire Department for an Intergenerational Event during Child Passenger Safety Week. They conducted CarFit checks alongside car seat checks, educating firefighters and the public about older driver safety.

**Action:** Reach out to Permanent Checking Stations or Safe Kids Coalitions to discuss integrating older driver safety and CarFit into existing community offerings. Highlight how this inclusion contributes to overall community wellness initiatives. Visit [www.buckleupnc.org/locations/](http://www.buckleupnc.org/locations/) to find Permanent Checking Stations and Safe Kids Coalitions near you.



## Annual Wellness Services

IHHS incorporated CarFit into the Annual Aging Well Health Screenings, which covered various aspects of aging wellness, including balance, cognition, nutrition, hearing, and other quality-of-life measures. This integration allowed for additional assessments and referrals, seamlessly incorporating CarFit into the screening process.

**Action:** Collaborate with organizations or healthcare providers conducting annual assessments. Integrate driving-related questions and make referrals to CarFit sessions, promoting a comprehensive approach to older adult health and safety.

# FAQs

## Who can be a part of CarFit in North Carolina?

CarFit is open to individuals from any background. Anyone can undergo CarFit training, and organizations of all types have the opportunity to host a CarFit program or session.

## Are there any administrative requirements?

CarFit Event Coordinators and Coordinator 1:1s are required to submit reports through the CarFit website within 30 days. There are no additional administrative requirements specific to NC.

## What liability coverage is provided for CarFit volunteers?

AARP provides volunteer travel accident insurance and comprehensive general liability insurance while volunteers perform their responsibilities.

## Are there any costs associated with hosting CarFit sessions?

No, participation in CarFit is free for both drivers and organizations. Staff time is the most significant expense. While resources could be dedicated to materials and outreach, essential items for hosting events can usually be found around your organization.

## What specific training do volunteers need for CarFit sessions?

CarFit Technician training is free, taking approximately 4-6 hours (instructor led module, hands-on lab, and event participation) and open to individuals from diverse backgrounds. After completing at least one community event, trained technicians can become a Coordinator 1:1, with an additional 1-2 hours of training. Ongoing mentorship and support are required for new Coordinator 1:1s.

To request a training or learn more, email [info@ncseniordriver.org](mailto:info@ncseniordriver.org).

## Can CarFit sessions be conducted virtually?

Local virtual sessions are not currently offered. However, drivers can sign up for virtual sessions through CarFit National.