

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

THIRD PARTY OPERATOR (TPO) TO OPERATE A 5311 RURAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE FOR RESIDENTS OF BEN HILL COUNTY

SUMMARY OF DESIRED SERVICES

The Ben Hill County Board of Commissioners desires an independent provider of transportation services to manage and totally operate a rural public transportation program for social service agency clients and the general public who reside in Ben Hill County.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

1. To find A TPO who is prepared to work with Ben Hill County to establish a new approach to meeting rural transportation needs and who has demonstrated such skills as necessary to achieve this goal;
2. To provide transportation services to the disadvantaged in Ben Hill County to social services agencies.
3. To provide cost-effective transportation to medical services for those who are without transportation or have depended on more costly means of obtaining transportation.
4. To enhance the economic base of Ben Hill County by providing transportation for shopping to grocery and other retail stores in the area.

PROPOSAL DEADLINE DATE

To be eligible for consideration, the original proposal for this request and two (2) copies must be received by the Board of Commissioners of Ben Hill County, no later than **December 1, 2014**.

The Board of Commissioners will make a final decision at the next Board Meeting on December 2, 2014.

Submit Proposal To:

Ben Hill County Board of Commissioners
402 E Pine Street #A
Fitzgerald GA 31750-2954
(229) 426-5100

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Ben Hill County will provide to the successful TPO:

- The local match for the capital equipment;
- Vehicle insurance as prescribed by the GDOT on the transit vehicles;
- Administrative Assistance as needed.

The successful TPO shall provide the following for the proper management and operation of the Ben Hill Transit System:

- All administrative services for the operation of a complete Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation System of Ben Hill County. Program must be operated 8 hours per day for at least 260 days per year, which will exclude holidays in accordance with policies and procedures set by County and GDOT;
- Day-to-day supervision of the Transit Drivers; to include strict enforcement of the Ben Hill Transit System Zero Tolerance Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy, and compliance with the Ben Hill Transit System Title VI Plan; both of which are in Final Draft and under review by DOT. In addition, provide required training as prescribed by GDOT and/or other service agencies which Ben Hill County elects to enter into a Purchase of Services agreement.
- Supervise the overall upkeep of the transit vehicles which includes preventative maintenance, cleaning, repair and component replacement as necessary.
- Implementation of such service expansions or improvements as may be recommended by TPO and approved by County, or as may otherwise be agreed upon between the parties from time to time.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The TPO shall offer the following services:

Services will be demand response and fixed route transportation for all residents of Ben Hill County, as approved by County Board of Commissioners. The aforementioned services are defined as follows:

1. Demand Response Service constitutes service with at least 24 hours advance notice. Any advance notice less than 24 hours should be worked into regular schedule when feasible

2. Fixed Route Service constitutes service with fixed origin and destination at pre-determined times with occasional route deviation.
3. Hours of service are from 8 a.m. to 5p.m. (In no case shall a passenger be refused service within the regular service hours unless on extenuating circumstances).
4. Passenger constitutes any resident of Ben Hill County and a passenger-trip constitutes transporting one passenger one-way between two locations.

CONTRACT TERMS

The initial contract term is January 1, 2015 thru June 30, 2016, with a potential for four (4) additional one (1) year option(s) to renew, July-June, which options shall be exercisable at the sole discretion of the Ben Hill County Board of Commissioners. The contract may be amended in writing from time to time by mutual consent of the parties. The resulting contract does not guarantee volume or a commitment of funds.

OPERATING SERVICES

The TPO shall provide all reservations and scheduling functions as outlined in the following (any schedule changes must be approved by the County):

1. General Tasks - The TPO shall respond to telephone requests from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday thru Friday, except holidays, and maintain a daily log record of all telephone calls received;
2. Demand Responsive Services Reservation Procedures - The TPO shall accept reservations for demand response service up to 3 p.m the day prior to the day of trip. Monday thru Friday. Reservations should be made on working day in advance of the trip. The dispatcher shall maintain a demand response reservation log, recording the name, address and telephone number of the caller and the requested pick-up times and locations for both the originating and the return trips. If the trip can be accommodated, the dispatcher will make the reservations, record method of payment, type of trip, and Medicaid number, if warranted. If trip cannot be accommodated, the dispatcher shall note this on the demand response log as designed by Contractor and County.

SERVICE DELIVERY PROCEDURES

The TPO shall adhere to the following service delivery procedures:

1. The drivers must accept all trip requests related to him/her by the dispatcher so long as they are within his/her specified service area and within the specified service time. There shall be no right of refusal based on vehicles availability (except the passenger maximum load factor) or any consideration other than verifiable catastrophic mechanical failure of the vehicles in the fleet;
2. The vehicles must be on time, unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond the TPO's or driver's control. A 95% on-time performance rate is required. Notification must be given by the Contractor to the Patron in the event of unavoidable delays;
3. For social service clients, drivers must wait five (5) minutes after the appointed pick-up time before a passenger can be considered a no-show. (A no-show is a passenger who is not at the appointed pick-up location at the scheduled time and who has not informed the TPO in advance that he/she would be absent)
4. Drivers shall offer assistance to all passengers as needed to board and depart from the vehicles; secure all wheelchairs, and request that all passengers buckle their seatbelts;
5. Drivers shall refrain from smoking, eating and drinking while passengers are in the vehicles. Drivers shall request passengers to refrain from smoking, eating, and drinking in the vehicles;
6. Drivers shall maintain daily records of mileage, time, type and number of trips, and passenger types as required by GDOT and the County. These records shall be turned in to Contractor on a weekly basis.
7. Drivers shall inform supervisors of any passenger complaints. Thereafter, the supervisors shall complete passenger complaint forms and send copies to the County for record purposes or for any appropriate action if necessary. The complaint shall be filed with County within one (1) week from the date of the occurrence.
8. The County, through the TPO, shall inform the appropriate social services agency representative regarding any difficulties experienced in transporting an agency client, whether related to safety, behavior or other reason;
9. Drivers and TPO are prohibited from soliciting or accepting any tips or other forms of gratuity other than the approved fare from system riders.

TYPES OF VEHICLES

The county is requesting through the 5311 Grant, to receive 3 Shuttle vans with lifts. These would be the vehicles the TPO would utilize to provide transportations services to the residents of Ben Hill County.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

The vehicles under this agreement must be maintained in safe and good mechanical condition. Vehicles shall be subject to inspections by GDOT representatives. DOT inspections will occur on an annual basis and in accordance with the Vehicle Monitoring Form. The Contract shall submit the invoices of any work to the County for subsequent submission to the GDOT. These invoices shall be part of the Monthly Reports. The payment for these repairs and component replacements shall be made by the TPO and charged to the current Section 5311 Program Budget. Vehicles utilized for the Section 5311 Program shall be parked overnight and on weekends at places to be designated by the County. Mechanics must meet all requirements for a safety-sensitive employee described in the County's Zero Tolerance Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy.

QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING GUIDELINES

The following qualifications and training guidelines must be met by the County and TPO:

1. Drivers qualifications - The County will assure that drivers have or will be able to obtain a valid Georgia License. A Class C Georgia Commercial License CDL) will be required when County provides a vehicle that will transport more than 15 passengers (including drivers); be able to read, write and make correct change; have the ability to physically assist in loading and unloading of elderly and disabled passengers when necessary; have a minimum of five (5) years driving experience; have thorough knowledge of traffic safety and excellent driving record; have 20/20 vision (corrected) and be in good physical health; have the ability to deal effectively with the elderly, disabled and general public; have ability to arrive at work on time; have favorable job history and satisfactory references; and meet all requirements for a safety-sensitive employee described in the Ben Hill Transit System Zero Tolerance Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy.
2. The TPO will design and provide a driver's training program that includes the following: use of equipment; defensive driving techniques; CPR training; Passenger Service and Safety (PASS) assistance techniques for proper care and handling of disabled riders; fare structure; system information; preventative maintenance requirements; and record keeping.
3. Dispatcher Qualifications - Dispatcher is to be employed by the TPO, should have the following qualifications: knowledge of county and city roads; verbal communication skills (good telephone manners); high school graduate or equivalent; experience in dispatching; favorable job history and satisfactory references; ability to coordinate variable routing needs; and meet all requirements for a safety-sensitive employee described in the Ben Hill Transit System Zero Tolerance Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy.
4. Dispatcher Training - The TPO shall design and provide a dispatcher training program that includes the following: use of dispatching equipment; grouping of trips for more effective utilization of vehicles and resources; fare structures; system information; record keeping; and knowledge of special needs of social service agency clients.

5. TPO will agree to comply with and be responsible for implementing any drug testing program of all TPO's employees working on the Sections 5311 Program, full or part-time, if mandated by the GDOT and adopted by the County and to comply with the requirements of Federal Transit Administration 49 CFR Part 40 Drug and Alcohol Testing Program.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

The TPO shall operate the Section 5311 Program services in accordance with the guidelines and policies set by GDOT. TPO will maintain appropriate books, records, documents, papers and other evidence pertaining to public transportation for inspection, upon request by the County and the GDOT, or their representatives for the contract period. These records must include work orders generated for maintenance and records of payments for said maintenance. TPO will be responsible for submitting GDOT monthly reports from information recorded by drivers and from information furnished by the County. These reports are to be sent to GDOT District 4, Tifton, Georgia. The reports for the month ended shall be submitted to the GDOT District Office by the tenth (10th) of the following month and copies of the reports must be sent to the County.

AUDITING

TPO will maintain an acceptable accounting system in accordance with Federal and State Regulations. TPO will be required to provide for an independent audit at the end of the contract period. This end-of-year audit also constitutes the final financial report. The audit shall be performed by a certified or licenses independent auditor. Further details are included in OMB Circular A-128.

REVENUE AND EXPENSE REPORTS AND INVOICING

Revenue: There will be a fare structure established by the County for the Transit System. Social Service agency riders will be paid for by the social service agency. TPO will be responsible for billing of these agencies for expenses on a monthly basis. All fares and purchase of service income must be documented on the invoice submitted by the County. All POS Contracts must recover the cost of service based on the current fully allocated cost formula.

Expenses and Invoicing: TPO will submit monthly invoices to the Board of Commissioners of Ben Hill County as part of the Monthly Operating Report. TPO will prepare and submit monthly GDOT Reimbursement Form, together with TPO's monthly invoice. The Chairman will after review and approval, sign and forward the Reimbursement Form to the GDOT District Office. TPO will make sure that the Reimbursement Form is ready for the signature of Board of Commissioners in a timely manner. County will reimburse TPO in a timely manner for the services provided by TPO in accordance with the Contract including any other incidental costs of

the program that were approved by County and incurred by TPO.

ACCIDENT REPORTING

The Drivers will report any accidents to the TPO and County within one (1) hour of the occurrence or, if the offices are closed, by 9 a.m. on the following workday. The drivers shall give TPO a copy of the investigating officer's accident report. The TPO will send copies of the report to the County and GDOT District Representative within three (3) work days from the date of the accident. The procedures required for a safety-sensitive employee described in the Ben Hill Transit System Zero Tolerance Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy will be strictly followed.

CIVIL RIGHTS ASSURANCES

The TPO must agree as a condition to receiving Federal assistance under Section 5311, as amended, that:

1. No person shall on the grounds of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, or handicap be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any project, program, or activity for which this recipient receives Federal Financial Assistance from the Federal Transit Act;
2. The TPO shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and shall take affirmative action to insure that applicants are employed and that employees are treated during employment without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;
3. The TPO will not conduct any program or operate any facility that receives or benefits from Federal financial assistance administered by the Department of Transportation in compliance with all requirements imposed by or pursuant to 49 CFR Part 27, Non-discrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Federally Assisted Programs and Activities received or benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance;
4. The TPO will fully implement the Ben Hill Transit Title VI Program.

SERVICE CRITERIA

The TPO shall use the following service criteria as a guide for evaluation of vehicle utilization:

1. The service should be complimentary and not duplicate other transportation services.
2. Monthly ridership should exceed 500 person trips per active vehicle in service.

3. Vehicle Utilization should exceed 120 hours per month per active vehicle.
4. Vehicles should be available for service during the approved hours of service.
5. Vehicle trips for contract service shall, at a minimum recover all costs.
6. Regular service ridership should exceed 0.5 passengers per vehicle service mile.
7. Total system utilization should at a minimum achieve 10% of its ridership from fare-paying non-agency passengers.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

The TPO must comply with relevant Federal and State Laws and regulations pertaining to FTA Section 5311 Program Funds to include the Office of Management and Budget Circular 74-7 in the Hatch Act.

PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

Contents to be submitted:

- 1) Complete Cover Page
 - a. Name of Organization, Business Address, Contact Person, and Telephone Number
 - b. Legal Status of Organization (Indicate whether organization is a for-profit corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, non-profit, government, etc.)
 - c. Description of Organization (Provide a brief description of the major business functions, history, and organization structure.)
 - d. Federal Tax ID number
 - e. E-Verify number and date
- 2) Service Proposal - Answer the six questions with all of the above factors as reference.
- 3) Submit a list of at least three references for which you have provided transportation services for the past five years.
- 4) Submit any letters of recommendation that you might receive from current human service agencies you are servicing.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Board of Commissioners of Ben Hill County reserves the right to reject or accept any and all

bids received as a result of this RFP, to negotiate with any source it deems to be qualified, or to cancel this RFP in part or its entirety, if it is in the best interest of Ben Hill County.

The selection of the successful bidder will be made by the Board of Commissioners which will take into account the suggestions of the applicable local governments.

1. Infrastructure:
 - a. Experience in transportation service, emphasis on delivery experience with specialized service for the elderly and disabled;
 - b. Qualifications and experience of key project personnel (computer training, personnel management, etc.);
 - c. Fleet management capability
 - d. Financial stability and management;
 - e. Supplemental vehicles.
2. Administration:
 - a. Ability to record and report, in a timely manner as required by the contracts, all information and reports required by the County, DHS and GDOT;
 - b. Ability to implement and enforce the County Zero Tolerance Drug and Alcohol Policy and the County Title VI Program;
 - c. Ability to maintain a clear and accurate recording, accounting and filing system.
3. Operations:
 - a. Supervision of drivers and services;
 - b. Ability to Schedule, Dispatch and Verify all trips requested;
 - c. Ability to handle and resolve all complaints;
 - d. Ability to insure satisfactory needs of DHS and public services
4. Familiarity with the area's needs and challenges both geographically and programmatically
5. Flexibility to adapt to new needs, programmatic changes, and expansion or reduction of services
6. Assurances to adhere to all GDOT and DHS regulations and policies as well as any other federal, state, or local laws, ordinances, regulations, or policies.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

Answer these questions in paragraph form identifying all relative information to the establishment, administration and operations of DHS and Public Transportation Services.

The sub-parts of these questions are to assist you with the answers; they are not intended to be the complete questions. Proposals should provide additional information as needed to clearly identify the proposer's potential and abilities.

⇒ Question One (Infrastructure) (15%)

Describe current and potential infrastructure (excluding vehicles to be received from the Section 5311 program), experience and management abilities. Please make sure to include the following areas of information:

Infrastructure

Supplemental Vehicle Inventory (type, age, mileage, mechanical assessment)

Base of Operations – Office Equipment (copiers, fax, etc.), Communications Equipment, Computer Equipment, Internet Access and Email Account

Experience

Staff - Positions, Duties, Experience, Training, Education (any related courses taken)

Drivers - Experience, Training, Education (any related courses taken)

Management Abilities

Computer Experience Proficiency

Financial understanding of 5311 Grant and operations budgeting

Personnel and vehicle management

Vehicle maintenance policies and procedures

⇒ Question Two (Administration) (15%)

Describe current and potential administration abilities and procedures. Please make sure to include the following areas of information:

What will be the trip order and scheduling procedure?

Describe how your company will ensure that all trips are provided.

Describe the accounting system and procedures that will be used to accurately reflect revenues and expenses.

Describe the filing system that will be used for accounting records, trip orders, drivers' trip manifests, maintenance, etc.

⇒ Question Three (Operations) (15%)

Describe current and potential service delivery strategy to performing operations for DHS and public services. Please make sure to include the following areas of information:

Describe day-to-day scheduling and coordination.

Describe how drivers will be instructed with day-to-day operations, such as trip manifests.

What kind of contact will there be between the office and drivers (and other staff)?

Describe how complaints will be handled internally. (please exclude the DHS complaint procedure).

Describe internal changes and actions that will be taken to ensure that the same kind of complaint does not recur.

⇒ Question Four (Familiarity with the Area) (20%):

Please discuss your familiarity with the geographic and programmatic needs and challenges or the area.

⇒ Question Five (Flexibility) (20%):

Please discuss your ability to accommodate changing needs, programmatic alterations, and any expansion or reduction of services that may be deemed necessary.

⇒ Question Six (Assurances for Compliance) (15%):

Please provide assurances that you are capable, adequately knowledgeable, and dedicated to adhering to all GDOT and DHS regulations and policies as well as any other federal, state, or local laws, ordinances, regulations, policies, or requirements.