

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Date: September 4, 2007

Subject: Set Public Hearing on an application to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for Rural Operating Assistance Funds (ROAP)

Attachments: 1. Application
2. Notice of Public Hearing

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The Henderson County Board of Commissioners (the "Board") has scheduled for September 19, 2007 a public hearing on an application for a North Carolina Department of Transportation Rural Operating Assistance Grant (ROAP) in the amount of \$231,448. If awarded, the funds will supplement the Apple Country Transit Operation.

These grant funds are not intended to supplant or to replace existing federal state or local funds already designated to provide services. The grant funds will provide for senior and disabled transportation programs, transportation for a WorkFirst educational program, and an experimental fixed-route operation to Edneyville. None of the programs require matching funds from Henderson County.

Before taking action on the application, the Board of Commissioners must hold a public hearing no earlier than 14 days after publication of the notice in the newspaper. Staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners schedule the public hearing for its ROAP application for September 19 and approve submittal of the application to NCDOT subject to any comments at the hearing.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Planning Staff requests the Board of Commissioners to review the application and schedule a public hearing for Wednesday September 19, 2007 at 11:00 a.m

Suggested Motion:

I move that the board schedule a public hearing for Wednesday September 19, 2007 at 11:00 a.m.

We currently provide Application for Operating Assistance FY07-08 Rural Operating Assistance Program Funds

Name of Applicant (County)	Henderson County
County Manager	Steven Wyatt
County Manager's Email Address	swyatt@hendersoncountync.org
County Finance Officer	J Carey McClelland
CFO's Email Address	cmcclelland@hendersoncountync.org
Mailing Address	213 First Avenue Hendersonville, NC 28792
Person Completing this Application	Hope E. Bleecker
Email Address	hbleecker@hendersoncountync.org
Phone Number	(828) 697-4819 ext 1059
Supplemental ROAP Funding Request Included:	Yes

Application Instructions

- Read each question carefully. Be sure to answer all the questions.
- Answer questions with complete sentences, providing enough detail to completely answer the question.
- Click on the gray rectangle and type each answer. If needed, the text will automatically wrap to the next row. The answer may wrap to the next page if necessary.
- If there are questions regarding this application, contact the NCDOT-PTD Regional Transportation Program Consultant/Planner assigned to the area served by the transit system.
- *Outreach and public involvement in the use of the ROAP funds is key to providing service that meets the needs of individuals within the community. County managers and finance officers are encouraged to discuss the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements with the local system transportation directors.*

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION FOR FORMULA FUNDS – EDTAP

These funds may be sub-allocated to the transit system or human service agencies in the county. EDTAP funds will be used to provide transportation services for elderly and disabled individuals when other funding sources are not available. If an individual meets the eligibility criteria of both EDTAP and an agency transportation program, the agency's program funds will be used as long as they are available before using EDTAP funds.

EDTAP-1 Describe the process for determining which organizations will receive a sub-allocation of EDTAP funds. The response should address: (1) assessment of needs in the service area (2) equity in requesting and disbursement of funds (3) criteria for determining amount of funds sub-allocated to each organization and (4) projected units of service.

Henderson County and transportation operator WCCA conducted a needs assessment through notification of Human Service Agencies in the area. We held a brainstorming meeting of agency representatives to determine what EDTAP transportation program would be appropriate based on available funding. The Council on Aging and Vocational Rehabilitation specified various needs. Trip estimates were based on the demand balanced against the amount of funding available. The requests for service were not "cut", but rather were balanced with the amount of funding available for the program. Henderson County expects to provide 5350 passenger trips this year with formula EDTAP based on the requests.

EDTAP-2 Describe the transportation or other services that will be provided by the transit system or human service agencies with EDTAP funds (i.e. trips by transit system or private providers, agency staff transportation, volunteers, mileage reimbursement, etc.)

WCCA is the sole operator of transportation service and will provide transportation by van and wheelchair lift-equipped buses.

EDTAP-3 Not all elderly and disabled citizens in the service area are human service agency clients. Describe efforts to reach out to these citizens who may need transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores or other destinations.

Provider WCCA runs newspaper advertisements, radio advertisements, and has flyers placed in local doctors' offices and throughout hospitals and physical rehabilitation facilities in our area. The director of WCCA speaks to local civic groups and operates a website that advertises the service.

EDTAP-4 Describe the process for monitoring the EDTAP Program throughout the year to assure that (1) EDTAP funded services are provided to elderly and disabled individuals not receiving transportation assistance from another funding source and (2) that all expenditures are allowable.

The WCCA dispatcher asks various questions of each caller, including age, address, and whether they are on Medicaid to determine if there is any other funding source that could sponsor transportation service for the individual (such as Medicaid, HCCBG, ADA paratransit, etc). Depending on the answers to eligibility questions, the person may be offered general public transportation, depending on where they live (e.g. within City limits vs. rural areas.)

EDTAP-5 Does the transit system or any human service agency prioritize or restrict EDTAP funded services based on the purpose, origin or destination of the trip? If yes, describe the prioritization process or restrictions.

Henderson County does not restrict EDTAP services based on purpose origin or destination of the trip.

EDTAP-6 What is done by the transit system and/or agencies to assure that EDTAP funded services are provided for as long as possible during FY2007-FY2008? Will the county or other local agencies provide funds if the EDTAP formula allocation is expended in less than twelve months?

Expense and revenue reports are received from the finance office of WCCA. These reports contain the amount of available funding left to cover a specified period. This information is balanced against performance measures to ensure the service is being operated appropriately. WCCA provides necessary matches to the transit grants in order to cover shortfalls. Program estimates are for a nine month period October 2007-June 2008.

EDTAP-7 What objectives will the county use to evaluate the effectiveness/efficiency of the program? When will the EDTAP funded services be evaluated?

The County will evaluate ridership records and expense reports to measure effectiveness and efficiency quarterly. Efficiency is defined as the number of service miles per revenue mile which determines how efficiently vehicles were used to provide revenue services. The standard set forth for EDTAP by Henderson County is 1.25 service miles per revenue mile. Effectiveness is defined as the number of revenue trips per service mile. This determines how effectively revenue trips are coordinated or provided for each service mile. The performance measure for EDTAP will be .10 revenue trips per mile. The program will be monitored to ensure acceptable standards in terms of cost per trip. Hours of service, passengers per hour, repeat riders, origins and destinations, and all cost records will be examined to make sure that productivity and costs are within acceptable ranges for the program. If these indicators show any deviations from normal patterns, we will make appropriate modifications to ensure that we are meeting standards.

EDTAP -8 Describe public outreach efforts for this program.

WCCA and Henderson County partner together on outreach efforts. Both agencies are extremely involved in the community and make use of local newspaper advertisement, the local government channel television, and radio advertisement, flyers for the medical community, newspaper advertisement, and outreach to medical offices. For example, WCCA typically advertises on the local AM affiliate's billboard in both English and Spanish. We also have brochures in Spanish on the buses.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION FOR FORMULA FUNDS –Employment Transportation Assistance Funds

These funds can only be sub-allocated to the Department of Social Services, Workforce Development Programs and the Community Transportation System in the county. Funds can only be transferred to EDTAP and RGP following certification by the county manager that the employment transportation needs of the county have substantially been met.

EMP-1 Describe the transportation or other services that will be provided by the transit system or DSS with WF/EMP funds. (i.e. trips by transit system or private providers, agency staff transportation, volunteers, mileage reimbursement, automobile repairs, etc.)

WCCA will provide demand responsive employment trips for WorkFirst participants as requested through DSS throughout all areas of Henderson County.

EMP-2 Describe the process for monitoring the WF/EMP Program throughout the year to assure that expenses by the transit system and/or DSS are allowable. (See Eligible Transportation Expenses Matrix)

The WCCA dispatcher asks various questions of each caller, including age, address, and trip purpose to make sure that the trip corresponds to the WF/EMP goals. If there is any other funding source that could sponsor transportation service for the individual such as Medicaid, HCCBG, ADA paratransit, etc. the trip is not served. Depending on the answers to eligibility questions, the person may be offered another type of transportation depending on where they live (e.g. within City limits vs. rural areas.)

EMP-3 What is done by the transit system and/or DSS to assure that WF/EMP funded services are provided for as long as possible during FY2007-FY2008? What will the county do if the WF/EMP formula allocation is expended in less than twelve months?

Expense and revenue reports are received from the finance office of WCCA. These reports contain names, date and time as well as the service provided. WCCA provides necessary matches to the transit grants in order to cover any shortfalls. Program estimates are for the nine month period October 2007-June 2008.

EMP-4 Describe the process for determining when it is appropriate or necessary to transfer WF/EMP funds to EDTAP or RGP funds as allowed in the program guidelines?

Performance of the program and available funds will be measured along with an assessment of the demand for the program. Typically after the second quarter a decision to transfer funds is made based on performance of the other programs and available funds in this program.

EMP-5 What objectives will the county use to evaluate the effectiveness/efficiency of the program? When will the WF/EMP funded services be evaluated?

The County will evaluate records to measure effectiveness and efficiency **quarterly**. Efficiency is measured by service miles per revenue mile, which determines how efficiently vehicles were used to provide revenue services. Our performance measure for demand response is typically 1.25 service miles per revenue mile. Effectiveness is measured by revenue trips per service mile, which determines how effectively revenue trips were coordinated or provided for each service mile. The performance measure for demand response trips will be .10 revenue trips per mile. The program will be monitored to ensure acceptable standards in terms of cost per trip. WorkFirst transportation trips are typically scheduled to collect more than one to two passengers from origins/destinations since passengers travel to classes and events together. During the first quarter of operation, these standards will be re-evaluated and all cost records will be examined to make sure that productivity and costs are within acceptable ranges for the program as defined for NCDOT. If these indicators show any deviations from normal patterns, we will make appropriate modifications so that the program meets acceptable ridership and cost standards.

EMP-6 Describe public outreach efforts for this program.

WCCA maintains public outreach with the local WorkFirst program that operates through the Henderson County Department of Social Services. WCCA is actively involved in Headstart, self-sufficiency programs, housing, and weatherization initiatives, which provides an excellent basis for advertising this particular aspect of ROAP transportation funding. Programs are advertised in newspaper and radio, brochures are offered in Spanish and we also use local AM radio WHKP and their electronic billboard to advertise programs.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION FOR FORMULA FUNDS –Rural General Public Funds

These funds are intended to provide transportation services for individuals who are not human service agency clients. These funds can only be sub-allocated to the community transportation system.

RGP-1 Describe the process for (1) assessing transportation needs in the service area and (2) determining the projected units of service.

Henderson County and operator WCCA conducted needs assessments through notification of Human Service Agencies in the area. We held a brainstorming meeting of agency representatives to determine what RGP use would be appropriate based on available funding. RGP funding has been used in the past for medical trips without age restriction. It was determined that the program has grown through the years and that the needs for RGP medical are well satisfied. Based on the previous program that operated in 2006, we anticipate providing service to 1800 passengers. In addition to continuing this program, the idea of running a fixed route to Edneyville evolved as part of the brainstorming effort with local agencies. The county receives continuous requests for service in that area. There are a large number of residents who need transportation services to get to local jobs around Edneyville and to shop at the neighboring commercial centers. The estimate of projected units of service is based on density in the area – roughly five riders per hour which compares to other start-up fixed route transportation we have provided.

RGP- 2 Describe the transportation services that will be provided with RGP funds and the geographic area in which the services will be provided.

County-wide demand responsive medical transportation without an age limit. This service will be provided throughout all areas of the County on an as needed basis. Service is available from 6:30 am through 6:30 p.m. Budget for the services is approximately \$27,228. WCCA expects to carry 1800 passengers.

Fixed route service to Edneyville. This rural area has a growing population of residents who do not own cars. WCCA will operate experimental fixed route transit service to this area using a cutaway bus. The proposal is to use \$67,000 of RGP from both the formula as well as the supplemental appropriation to provide the service from Edneyville to Wal-Mart Super Center Monday through Friday, from 9:00 AM until 6:00 PM. The service will link up with the existing White Route for access to other areas throughout Hendersonville.

RGP- 3 Will a passenger pay a fare for RGP service? Describe the proposed fare structure?

The fare for RGP medical trips is \$2.00 per one-way. Edneyville fixed route will charge \$1.50 per trip for the service which will originate in the rural area of the county and link with the White Route at Wal-Mart, which charges 75 cents per ride.

RGP- 4 Describe the process for monitoring the RGP Program throughout the year to insure that all expenses by the transit system are allowable? (See Eligible Transportation Expenses Matrix)

For the medical trip component, the WCCA dispatcher asks various questions of each caller, including age, address, whether they are on Medicaid, to determine if there is any other funding source that could sponsor transportation service for the individual such as Medicaid, HCCBG, ADA paratransit, etc. Depending on the answers to eligibility questions, the person may be offered rural general public transportation if no other sources are available, depending on where the trip begins and ends. (eg within City limits vs. rural areas.)

RGP- 5 Describe how the local match requirement for RGP funds will be met.

Fares will supply the match and WCCA will pay any shortfalls.

RGP-6 Does the transit system prioritize or restrict RGP funded services based on the purpose, origin or destination of the trip? If yes, describe the prioritization process or restrictions.

No

RGP-7 What does the transit system do to assure that RGP funded services are provided throughout FY2007-FY2008? Will the county or other local agencies provide funds if the formula allocation is expended in less than twelve months?

Expense and revenue reports are received from the finance office of WCCA. These reports contain number of riders and pick up locations. WCCA provides necessary matches to the transit grants. Program estimates are for the nine month period October 2007-June 2008.

RGP-8 What objectives will the county use to evaluate the effectiveness/efficiency of the program? When will the RGP funded services be evaluated?

The County will evaluate ridership records and expense reports to measure effectiveness and efficiency quarterly. Efficiency is defined as the number of service miles per revenue mile which determines how efficiently vehicles were used to provide revenue services. The standard set forth for RGP medical demand response trips as set forth by Henderson County is 1.25 service miles per revenue mile. Effectiveness is defined as the number of revenue trips per service mile. This determines how effectively revenue trips were coordinated or provided for each service mile. The performance measure for RGP demand response will be .10 revenue trips per mile.

The program will be monitored to ensure acceptable standards in terms of cost per trip. Hours of service, passengers per hour, repeat riders, origins and destinations, and all cost records will be examined to make sure that productivity and costs are within acceptable ranges for the program. If these indicators show any deviations from normal patterns, we will make appropriate modifications.

The fixed-route experimental service goal is five riders per hour. The county will monitor ridership statistics quarterly to measure efficiency and effectiveness as described for the EDTAP and the WorkFirst Programs.

RGP-9 Describe public outreach efforts for this program.

We will use print and radio advertisement in both English and Spanish. We will work with any service organizations, including the Latino Advocacy Group to help get information to the Hispanic population and to advertise the route to residents in the area. This effort will include the announcement that Henderson County will add service to the area. The service description will be included in the current website www.applecountrytransit.com. WCCA will advertise through residential centers located in Edneyville such as public libraries, the Justice Academy, area churches, local granges, civic clubs and community centers.

IV. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION –SUPPLEMENTAL ROAP Funds**

Complete responses to the following questions are necessary to make an assessment of the eligibility of the proposed service. Incomplete responses will delay PTD review of the application.

- 1 Describe the proposed new or expanded service? (demand response/subscription/fixed route; within or outside normal service area, i.e. out of county employment route; days and hours of operation; service area; fare structure; provision of gas vouchers, volunteer reimbursement, etc.)
 - **EDTAP** The County proposes transportation for disabled residents of Henderson County to several programs at Vocational Solutions for work-related training activities. The service will operate on a subscription basis five days per week. The service will carry four to five clients per day on a year round basis. The service will be free of charge to the users. A donation will be suggested.
 - WCCA proposes adding days to its existing Fletcher route to transport senior (over 60) clients to Sammy Williams center in downtown Hendersonville, which is a congregate meal facility. This service will operate in the northern part of Henderson County and will function as a demand response service. The service will be free of charge to the users. A donation will be suggested.
 - **WorkFirst** Henderson County would like new service to transport clients to Goodwill Industries in Asheville, NC for a Certified Nurse Assistant training. The total cost estimated is \$11,401.00 to allow three groups of six to eight participants to complete the training each year. We anticipate operating subscription services which may include demand response transportation. The service is free of charge to the users, however a donation is suggested.
 - **Rural General Public** Henderson County proposes an additional transit route to Edneyville which will operate with a wheelchair lift equipped bus route which would operate as a fixed route M-F 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Since the route will operate outside of the UZA as an extended County service, the fare is anticipated to be \$1.50, which is double the fixed route fare within Hendersonville. This route will tie to the White Route on Public Transit Route that gets to Wal-Mart on the hour M-F 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. This would give passenger mobility options that currently do not exist in that part of the county. We anticipate that the service will be funded by formula & supplemental RGP in the amount of

\$67,000.00 and anticipate that it will carry a total of 11,300 persons or roughly 5 or more riders per hour.

2 How were the projected units of additional service with supplemental EDTAP, Employment and RGP funds determined? Indicate if the supplemental funds *will not allow* service to be provided throughout the twelve months of FY2008. (CT System requirement). Describe each program separately. See the Supplemental ROAP Sub-allocation Worksheet in Appendix B

- **EDTAP Vocational Solutions was based on 2 to 3 clients that are severely disabled needing wheelchair transportation 3 to 5 times a week twice a day. We calculated our operating costs and driver costs and multiplied by estimated times and mileages.**
- **EDTAP supplemental amount was determined by calculating operating costs of equipment and driver for about 120 miles round trip each day for 2 days a week for the Sammy Williams Center.**
- **WorkFirst Employment CNA transportation was estimated at 115 miles round trip, twice a day for fifteen days three different sessions a year. This was multiplied by our operating costs and driver costs.**
- **RGP was based on twenty miles round trip times 10 round trips per day multiplied by our operating costs and driver costs.**

The funds will supply service over a nine month period from October 2007 through June 2008

3 The supplemental EDTAP, Employment and RGP funds must be used to provide an increased level of service, including serving eligible individuals not currently served by the program. Describe how the agencies that receive the supplemental funds will notify eligible users of the service about the availability of the funds. Be specific.

The agencies will notify users through flyer and advertisements at their places of business. We have established contact persons at Vocational Solutions, Sammy Williams and Henderson County DSS. We will continue to meet with these professionals and monitor progress in order to ensure that clients are properly served. On the RGP service, Henderson County will add the service to its current website and will advertise through residential centers located in Edneyville such as public libraries, the Justice Academy, area churches, local granges, civic clubs and community centers.

4. Describe in detail efforts made to reach out to the community to make them aware of the additional funding and to identify service needs beyond those currently provided with the formula allocation.

On August 13, a meeting was held to identify various agency service needs. We brainstormed with the Vocational Solutions, Sammy Williams Center, Henderson County, and WorkFirst managers. We developed a needs list and formulated a draft application. We then scheduled a public hearing and placed advertisements in the Henderson County DSS and local libraries as well as the Hendersonville Times News.

5 If the county received supplemental ROAP funds in FY07, identify the estimated amount of funds for each program that will be expended by June 30, 2007.

none

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Henderson County
Grant Application for Rural Operating Assistance Funding

This is to inform the public of the opportunity to attend a public hearing on the proposed Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) application to be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation in September 2007. The public hearing will be held on September 19 at 11:00 am .in Henderson County in the commissioners room located at 100 King Street Hendersonville, NC. Henderson County will provide auxiliary aids and services under the ADA for disabled persons who wish to participate in the hearing. Anyone requiring special services should contact Ms. Hope Bleecker, Transportation Planner as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made.

The programs included in the Rural Operating Assistance Program application are:

1. Elderly & Disabled Transportation Assistance (EDTAP) Program provides operating assistance for the transportation of elderly and disabled citizens. This transportation assistance allows for the individuals to reside for longer periods in their homes, thereby enhancing their quality of life. For the purpose of EDTAP, an elderly person is defined as one who reaches the age of 60 or more years. A disabled person is defined as one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity, an individual who has a record of such impairment, or an individual who is regarded as having such impairment.
2. Employment Transportation Assistance Program is intended to provide operating assistance for transitional Work First, Workforce Development Programs and general public employment transportation needs. These funds are used to support the employment transportation needs of individuals that are not eligible to receive benefits from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.
3. Rural General Public (RGP) Program funds are intended to provide transportation service to individuals who are not human service agency clients.

The period of performance for Rural Operating Assistance Program funds is October 1, 2007.through June 30, 2007 The FY 2007-2008 ROAP individual program totals are:

PROGRAM	TOTAL
EDTAP	\$114,418
EMP	\$22,802
RGP	\$94,228
TOTAL	\$231,448

A copy of the application can be obtained from the Henderson County Planning Department, 213 1st Avenue East Hendersonville, NC, 28792 between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday, or by calling the Planning Department at (828) 697-4819 ext 1059. [TDD (828) 697-4580].

Elizabeth W. Corn
Clerk to the Board
Henderson County Board of Commissioners

For publication in the Hendersonville Times-News as a legal ad on September 5, 2007.

Please bill account #2036