

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: November 14, 2025

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Executive Director, DHHS

Subject: A report from the Executive Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting authorization to increase 2025 and 2026 fee-for-service specialized transportation contracts

File Type: Action Report

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**REQUEST**

The Executive Director, Department of Health and Human Services, is requesting authorization to increase 2025 and 2026 fee-for-service contracts with WHC MKE, LLC dba zTrip Milwaukee for providing specialized transportation services to older adult residents of Milwaukee County.

**POLICY**

Per Wisconsin Statutes, the Executive Director of DHHS is requesting authorization to increase the amount allocated to these fee-for-service contracts. And per Milwaukee County Code of Ordinances, the Commission on Aging's (COA) recommendations regarding the expenditure of funds for contracts are to be reviewed and approved by the County Board.

Wisconsin State Statutes:	59.52(31)
Milwaukee County Ordinance:	53.09; 53.12

**BACKGROUND**

Access to services for older adults begins with access to transportation. For many older adult residents of Milwaukee County, transportation becomes a barrier to aging in place due to lack of access to a personal vehicle, loss of driving privileges, limited public transportation options, mobility challenges, and limited income. Thus, the Milwaukee County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) contracts for transportation services to older adults including the Older Adult Transportation Service (OATS).

WHC MKE, LLC dba zTrip was selected as the OATS specialized transportation provider through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process in 2024 and began providing rides to qualified participants through a fee-for-service contract with Milwaukee County in

January of 2025 with a not-to-exceed amount of \$1,471,031.

Rides provided through this contract are funded by Wisconsin Stat. § 85.21 specialized transportation aid, federal Older Americans Act funds, Older American Act ARPA funds, and Basic County Allocation (BCA) revenue. The OATS program provides rides for healthcare, food access, socialization at senior centers, access to Older Americans Act funded service providers, and Milwaukee County cultural sites. Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) rides funded with 85.21 funds require a \$4.00 co-pay. Although non-medical rides are provided for free, as mandated by the Older Americans Act, riders are given the opportunity to contribute to support the program.

As the new OATS provider, zTrip has successfully transitioned into its role, accommodating existing participants and providing a high quality of customer service, while adhering to strict performance criteria at lower cost to the County. The existing contract is funded under a fee-for-service model that anticipates sufficient funding for approximately 43,000 rides, an increase of 5,000 rides from 2024.

During 2025, the OATS program has experienced an increase in service demand across all ride categories. Service demand growth is a result of broader awareness of the service, the growth of the county's older adult population, and responses to increased demand due to challenges in other OAA funded services. On October 3, 2025, per the contract requirement, zTrip provided notice that if current trends continued, total expenditures would surpass the \$1,471,031 annual budget. In order to bring ridership for the remainder of 2025 into line with the existing funding available, the AAA immediately instituted measures to suppress demand, including closing the service to new participants for the remainder of 2025 and restricting or limiting certain destinations. Because medical rides are vitally important to older adults, service limitations did not affect these rides.

While these measures are predicted to close the potential funding gap, DHHS is requesting approval to increase the 2025 contract by a not-to-exceed amendment of \$24,000, which will provide approximately a one-week cushion of ridership. The Milwaukee County AAA has sufficient Older Americans Act Title IIIB funding to cover this additional amount. The COA took action to approve this additional expenditure at its October 24, 2025, meeting.

In addition, the budget amount submitted to the County Executive to fund this contract in 2026 was \$2,393 less than the 2025 amount. Sufficient Older Americans Act Title IIIB funding was identified after the original budget submission to cover this difference. Thus, we are also requesting the County Board to approve this modest increase in the do-not-exceed amount for 2026 to align with the original 2025 contract. The Milwaukee County Commission on Aging took action to approve this additional 2026 expenditure at its October 24, 2025, meeting.

### **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

By supporting access to non-emergency medical appointments and nutrition for older adults who are non-drivers, this contract directly supports goal 3A by investing “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors authorize the Executive Director, Department of Health and Human Services, or her designee, to increase the 2025 fee-for-service contract with WHC MKE, LLC dba zTrip by \$24,000, from \$1,471,031 to \$1,495,031, from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. In addition, authorization is requested to increase the 2026 fee-for-service contract by \$2,393, from \$1,468,638 to \$1,471,031.

### **FISCAL EFFECT**

Funding for this service has been included in the DHHS 2025 and 2026 Budgets. The funding source for these requested increases is Older Americans Act Title IIB funds. No tax levy is proposed to be used for the requested contract increases.

### **TERMS**

The contracts are effective January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 and January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026.

### **VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

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### **PREPARED BY:**

Daniel Idzikowski, DHHS Aging Services Executive Director

### **APPROVED BY:**

*Shakita LaGrant-McClain*  
Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Executive Director

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

None

cc: County Executive David Crowley  
Sup. Willie Johnson, Jr., Chair, Finance Committee  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office  
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County  
Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office  
Maddie Fruehe, Budget and Management Analyst, SBP