

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: November 12, 2021

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

From: Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

Subject: Report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting authorization to enter into a 2022 purchase of service contract with First Transit Inc. from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022 at a cost of \$1,500,000

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

DHHS is requesting authorization to enter into a 2022 purchase of service contract with First Transit Inc. from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022 at a cost of \$1,500,000.

POLICY

Per Wisconsin Statutes, the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services is requesting authorization to execute these purchase of service contracts.

Wisconsin State Statutes:		59.52(31)
---------------------------	--	-----------

BACKGROUND

Without transportation, food, medical appointments, and the means to address many basic needs become inaccessible. This is especially necessary for older adults pursuing the idea of aging in place. Through funding provided by the Older Americans Act, Milwaukee County supports older adults who choose to remain connected to their neighborhoods and social circles instead of moving into more expensive senior housing alternatives earlier than may become necessary. Transportation is traditionally provided in groups and for individuals to destinations including senior centers and food stores, although group rides have been suspended since March 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department previously contracted with Able Access Transportation, which made a business decision to discontinue the contract with Milwaukee County in December 2020.

First Transit was awarded a one-year contract for 2021 as a result of the short timeframe in which the DHHS Division on Aging had to replace the vendor for this critical service, with the understanding that another Request for Proposals (RFP) process would be conducted in 2021 for these services.

Transportation is also a noted issue in terms of racial equity and has been documented as such in Milwaukee County by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC). The lack of a vehicle for a household is a more common issue in neighborhoods of Milwaukee that are primarily populated by African Americans. For example, in the Amani neighborhood, 92% of residents are African American and over a third (37%) do not have a vehicle available to their household, compared to 14% of households across Milwaukee County.¹

Ridership on this program so far in 2021 reflects this higher need for transportation within the African American community of Milwaukee County. The population share for riders of specialized transportation services offered by Milwaukee County is twice as high as the population share of African American residents over 60.

	Milwaukee County Population age 60+²	First Transit riders (funded by III-B Jan-Sept 2021)³
American Indian and Alaska Native	0%	1%
Asian	2%	.5%
Black or African American	19%	38%
White	76%	58%
Other	3%	2%

The 2022 RFP process was conducted in the fall of 2021 and included a panel consisting of two DHHS Division on Aging staff, one Commissioner to the Commission on Aging, and a public health expert. The panel unanimously recommended First Transit as the provider for Specialized Transportation to Milwaukee County's older adults.

From January to September 2021, First Transit has provided older adult residents with more than 22,500 rides. In 2022, through First Transit Inc., Aging's specialized transportation program will connect older adults, with and without mobility concerns, to: grocery stores, farmer's markets, healthcare, voting sites, wellness activities, social support services, recreational and cultural sites, senior centers, and special destinations as designated during a public emergency such as heating or cooling shelters, natural disaster shelters, vaccination sites, testing locations, or isolation facilities. These rides are meant to ensure that older residents remain healthy, engaged, and to the extent

¹ Amani BNCP Profile, Data You Can Use. <https://datayoucanuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Amani-BNCP-Profile.pdf>

² U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2019 5 year population estimates for Milwaukee County

³ Using SAMS database. Of total 337 riders, race was available for 195.

possible in the COVID pandemic, socially connected.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This item is aligned with Milwaukee County's strategic plan in that it delivers services based on health disparities, invests "upstream" to address root causes of health disparities, and dismantles barriers to diverse and inclusive communities by increasing access for vulnerable seniors, especially in communities of color.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors authorize the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, or her designee, to execute a 2022 purchase of service contract with First Transit, Inc. from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022 at a cost of \$1,500,000.

FISCAL EFFECT

Funding for this service has been included in DHHS Division on Aging's 2022 Budget. This program is supported by monies from Wis. Stats. §85.21 Specialized Transportation Services for the Elderly allocation, Older Americans Act Title III-B federal funds, and Basic County Allocation.

TERMS

This contract will be in place from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Shakita.LaGrant@milwaukeecountywi.gov
jonathan.janowski@milwaukeecountywi.gov
Morgen.McClelland@firstgroup.com

PREPARED BY:

Carrie Koss Vallejo, Program and Planning Coordinator, DHHS Division on Aging

APPROVED BY:


Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director

ATTACHMENTS:

None

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Jason Haas, Chair, Finance Committee
Sup. Felesia Martin, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, and Strategic Planning
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
Pam Matthews, Fiscal & Management Analyst, DAS
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Research & Policy Analyst, Comptroller's Office