



Department for the Aging

The City of New York
Department for the Aging
2 Lafayette Street
New York, New York 10007

DFTA Transportation Services Program Concept Paper February 27, 2015

A. Purpose

This concept paper is a precursor to the New York City Department for the Aging’s (DFTA) forthcoming Transportation Services Program Request for Proposals (RFP). Though subject to change, DFTA’s expectation is to issue an RFP in summer 2015, for contracts to commence on July 1, 2016 (FY 2017).

This concept paper highlights some of the defined and developing parameters, expectations and standards of the Transportation Services Program funded by DFTA. DFTA plans to take into strong consideration the feedback, suggestions and comments offered by the community when crafting the planned Transportation Services Program RFP. This is an opportunity for the public to comment on program elements, catchment areas, and structures that will best enable DFTA and its partner organizations to play a role in addressing the transportation needs of older adults in New York City. The following are some of DFTA’s considerations for the future Transportation Services Program:

- DFTA currently funds fourteen Transportation-only programs that vary in size and scope. These programs serve a limited number of community districts in the City and therefore a number of communities remain without a ready source for transportation provision. DFTA is seeking input from the provider community on ways to expand the program into the districts that are currently not covered (**Table 1**):

Table 1: Community District Analysis

	CDs <u>not</u> currently covered by transportation-only programs
Bronx	4, 5, 6, 12
Brooklyn	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17
Manhattan	All CD’s in Manhattan are covered
Queens	5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14
Staten Island	All CD’s in Staten Island are covered

DFTA welcomes ideas on how best to reach these community districts as well as thoughts on the geographic and other barriers to expansion that need to be

addressed. DFTA is interested in knowing what the provider community believes is the optimal size for a program. Creating a voucher system or otherwise establishing subcontracts with car services may be alternatives that could address some of these concerns.

- Ideally, the Transportation-only programs would not have wait lists. DFTA is exploring other ways to meet the needs of the seniors, e.g., through referrals, coordination and linkages with other community resources, and innovation in program structure.
- DFTA expects programs to provide a range of transportation options based on the needs of the seniors residing in its catchment area regardless of whether those clients attend other DFTA-funded programs, e.g. senior centers.
- DFTA invites comments on how proposers can infuse technology into their programs, e.g., routing programs, scanners, and applications on smart phones.
- Short of changing Unit Definitions, as those are established by the State, DFTA is looking for ideas on how to incentivize the identification of and provision of services to frail and/or isolated individuals who, without a low cost/subsidized transportation service, would be homebound.
- DFTA is also exploring ways to formally connect case management services with Transportation-only programs through a structured referrals process.
- While all services are provided free of charge, DFTA allows providers to request voluntary contributions. DFTA is looking for ideas on how to encourage voluntary contributions from program participants to defray some of the costs of operating a higher quality program.

B. Background

DFTA has procured funding for the transportation needs of seniors in various ways over the years. Currently, DFTA holds “Transportation-only” contracts with fourteen providers. When additional funds were made available in the past, the Department procured more services on top of existing ones; the last such procurement was in 2007. The patchwork nature of the transportation program left several community districts without any form of DFTA-funded transportation.

C. Program Details

In New York City, an array of services help older adults move from one place to another including: Access-A-Ride, Reduced-Fare Metrocards, and various forms of medical transportation paid for by Medicaid and other health insurance plans. In addition, approximately 80 of DFTA’s 250+ senior centers have some form of transportation enabling seniors to access the center, and once at the center, participate in activities outside the center, such as traveling to and from retail and grocery stores and to educational, cultural and social events. DFTA’s Transportation Services Program, with approximately 250,000 contracted units (i.e. one-way trips per person), is a complement to the transportation

services available to seniors and the general population in New York City. While there are a number of services offering transportation to seniors, DFTA recognizes that the need far exceeds the supply/availability of options, and that the re-procurement of this small program will help but not fully address the larger issues at hand regarding accessibility for seniors in the City.

The Transportation Services Program’s aim is to prevent seniors who are unable to travel or access public transportation from becoming socially isolated and/or declining physically by assisting them in getting to and from places they need to go in their communities (this is referred to as Individual Transportation). At the same time, DFTA’s Transportation Services Program also offers Group Transportation to enhance community engagement for seniors by offering recreational, social and educational trips. The ways in which services are structured and delivered in DFTA’s current Transportation Services Program vary from provider to provider. The variations are a reflection on the availability of public and other forms of transportation, linguistic composition of the communities being served, density of older adults within a community district, and frailty of the populations being served, amongst other factors. DFTA has and will continue to provide flexibility to its contractors, allowing providers to design and implement a model that is reflective of the needs and preferences of older adult community members. However, one of DFTA’s goals in the upcoming procurement is to ensure that each community district has both individual and group transportation options available.

Some variations in the two main categories of transportation (group and individual) provided in the Transportation Services Program are laid out in **Table 2** below. Some programs employ both group and individual forms of transportation, while others employ one or the other. The frequencies noted (Rarely, Sometimes, and Most of the Time) are not without exception and the data in the chart that follows is meant to provide a general sense of the scope of services offered currently.

Table 2: Variations and Frequencies within the Transportation Services Program

	Variable	Group Transportation	Individual Transportation ¹
Type of vehicle	Bus/Van	Most of the time	Sometimes
	Car (owned/operated by program)	Sometimes	Most of the time
	Taxi/Livery Service (subcontract or voucher)	Rarely	Sometimes
Type of Service	Door-to-door	Rarely	Sometimes
	Curb-to-curb	Sometimes	Most of the time
	Fixed Route	Most of the time	Rarely
Most Common Destination	Medical ²	Rarely	Most of the time
	Recreational programs (e.g., senior centers)	Most of the time	Sometimes
	Banks	Sometimes	Sometimes
	Stores (grocery, department, pharmacies)	Most of the time	Sometimes
	Cultural events, facilities, institutions	Most of the time	Rarely

¹ Seniors are eligible for individual transportation trips if: 1) the trip is beyond walking or driving ability; 2) a permanent or temporary physical, mental or sensory limitation prevents utilization of public transportation; or 3) a trip by public transportation requires transfers beyond the individual’s ability.

² The program does not provide medical transportation to those on Medicaid unless the client cannot obtain a prior approval number through the Medicaid system.

As noted earlier, this program cannot fully address the transportation needs of all seniors in New York City and thus, to optimize the funding, DFTA is looking for innovation and creativity, formal linkages to and communication with other transportation resources and service providers within the community being served. DFTA is hopeful that through the forthcoming RFP, the majority of seniors seeking transportation assistance will have access to the (or a linked/comparable) service. Therefore, DFTA will be looking to procure contractors who can creatively operate a program that is able to play a role in City's ability to achieve the following objectives:

- a. Help ensure the health and safety of the senior population being served;
- b. Enable access to medical appointments, grocery stores, banks, food pantries, and pharmacies;
- c. Enable access to social, cultural and religious programs that maintain and enhance a person's quality of life; and
- d. Create and maintain linkages and partnerships with other appropriate services.

Other standards and expectations of future contractors include, but are not limited to:

- Programs are expected to conduct outreach to the communities they propose to serve.
- An intake is completed for all clients who receive individual transportation; for referrals from case management agencies, the case management agency intake and referral documentation will suffice.
- Programs will be expected to use DFTA's Senior Tracking, Analysis and Reporting System (STARS) for reporting and record keeping. All clients, receiving transportation, not already in STARS, are entered into STARS.
- Drivers are required to provide assistance to clients who need help getting on (in) and off (out) of the vehicle and must receive appropriate training in working with the elderly population.
- The program employs a voluntary contributions protocol that is compliant with DFTA standards.
- All drivers and/or vehicles must have equipment that allows the driver to be in contact with the program, e.g., cellular, two-way radio.
- Transportation program providers follow DFTA's protocols and standards of practice regarding the provision of safe transportation. These standards relate, but are not limited to: reporting accidents; checking driver records/qualifications; ensuring and providing driver training; vehicle specifications and vehicle safety equipment; ongoing vehicle maintenance; maintaining proper insurance; vehicle signage; emergency and contingency planning, and ensuring public safety. In addition, any newly purchased or leased vehicles must meet the provisions of the American with Disabilities Act (with few exceptions).

D. Service Levels

At the time of release of the RFP, DFTA may establish minimum service levels for each catchment area. Catchment areas will be determined by DFTA using historical program data, population projections, and public comment via this concept paper.

E. Planned Method of Evaluating Proposals

DFTA’s Evaluation Committee will review, evaluate and rate all responsive proposals. DFTA will evaluate proposals based on the proposers’ experience, capability of delivering the proposed services (e.g., ability to serve the entire borough), and proposed program design. Proposers will be asked to provide evidence of their ability to serve the areas proposed.

F. Proposed Contract Term

It is anticipated that the term of the contract(s) awarded from this RFP will be from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019. The contract may include an option to renew for a period of up to three additional years. The Agency reserves the right, prior to contract award, to determine the length of the initial contract term and each option to renew, if any.

G. Anticipated Procurement Timeline

DFTA is currently planning to release an RFP in the summer of 2015. The anticipated contract start date is July 1, 2016.

H. Anticipated Funding

Current anticipated funding for Transportation Services Program is \$4.8 million. Funding may change at the time of the release of the RFP depending on availability of the funds.

I. Contractor Reporting Requirements

The Contractor will follow DFTA’s Transportation Program Standards as they relate to record keeping and reporting. The contractor is expected to use the STARS database for data collection and reporting.

J. Use of HHS Accelerator

To respond to the forthcoming Transportation Services Program RFP and all other client and community services Requests for Proposals, vendors must first complete and submit an electronic pre-qualifications application using the City’s Health and Human Services (HHS) Accelerator system. The HHS Accelerator system is a web-based system maintained by the City of New York for use by its human services agencies to manage procurement of services.

The forthcoming Transportation Services Program RFP will be released through the HHS Accelerator system. Only organizations with approved HHS Accelerator Business Application and Services Applications for one or more of the following service areas will be able to propose:

- Transportation
- Case Management
- Entitlements Assistance
- Food and Nutrition

Providers who are approved in HHS Accelerator to provide any of these services will be able to submit proposals for the Transportation Services Program procurement.

In addition to the Department for the Aging, the following City agencies that administer client and community services will be users of the HHS Accelerator System: Administration for Children’s Services, Department of Probation, Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator, Department of Correction, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Human Resources Administration, Department of Homeless Services, Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Department of Youth and Community Development, and Small Business Services.

Once vendors prequalify in a service area, they will then be prequalified to submit proposals for procurement opportunities in that service area from the 11 client and community services agencies listed above. HHS Accelerator will also allow providers to manage client and community services budgeting and invoicing through this common user interface. To submit a Business and Services application to become eligible to apply for this and other client and community services RFPs, please visit: <http://www.nyc.gov/hhsaccelerator>.

K. Contact Information and Deadline for Questions/Comments

Comments are invited by no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 16, 2015. Please email Conceptpaper@aging.nyc.gov and write “Transportation Services Program Concept Paper” in the subject line. Alternatively, written comments may be sent to the following address:

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