

Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) & New Freedom Projects Status

The City of Round Rock (the City), a public local government entity, submitted applications for JARC funding to implement a peak-hour job access and reverse commuter service providing access to employment for low-income and/or disabled transit dependent individuals, and 'choice riders' between Austin and Round Rock. The City was awarded \$541,784 of JARC funding through the initial round for operating costs, capital for the construction of two bus shelters, and capital costs of contracting associated with providing the express commuter service for approximately two years. An agreement for this initial funding to provide JARC service was executed last summer and the City has been working towards issuing their solicitations for the procurement of contracted service and bus shelters. In addition, the City was also awarded \$401,727 of JARC funding through the second round for the continuation of service through year three. An addendum to the original agreement to incorporate the additional funding is scheduled to be completed by the end of the month. The express service will expand opportunities for individuals seeking work at companies, large retailers, municipalities, as well as other smaller business and commercial centers located along the service corridor and close a non-existing service gap between Round Rock and Austin.

CARTS submitted an application for funding through the second round to create the Del Valle Metro Connector, which introduces new feeder routes, and poses a solution to the lack of urbanized area job and medical service access from southeastern Travis County. CARTS was awarded a total of \$892,267 of funding through both the JARC and New Freedom programs for the purchase of three new accessible vehicles and operating costs associated with providing the new service. Capital Metro and CARTS have been working together for a number of months to finalize the agreements, route schedules, and procurement of vehicles. The service began in January utilizing existing vehicles and the agreement for capital costs identified including the procurement of vehicles was also executed. It is anticipated the new vehicles will be purchased this month. The Capital Metro and CARTS interlocal agreement for services has been amended to include the operating portion of the new routes, which is scheduled to be fully executed this month also. The Del Valle Connector service is blended into the other services that CARTS provides to Capital Metro under the agreement, except that the hourly rate will be partially reimbursed through the grant funding.

Faith in Action Caregivers (FIAC), a network of interfaith volunteer caregiver groups in the Austin metropolitan area, provides services that enhance quality of life and foster independent living in older adults. FIAC recruits, trains and coordinates volunteers who offer personalized, door-through-door transportation and assistance to the frail elderly. FIAC was awarded \$215,469 of New Freedom funding through the initial round for operating and capital costs associated with expanding their program and an agreement was initiated a little over a year ago. Throughout this time, FIAC has been reimbursed for operating expenses such as staff salary, insurance, and volunteer background checks to support the continued program. By operating through this grant, Faith in Action has been able to service approximately 9,000 clients, resulting in an estimated 31,000 point-to-point trips. In addition, FIAC purchased computers, printers, telephony and other peripherals to increase the capacity and efficiency of the collaborative. The improved technical ability allowed them to continue to streamline scheduling and services for their clients as well as improve outreach activities to unserved and underserved neighborhoods in the area by being able to better manage client and volunteer data.

The Foundation for the Homeless (FFH) was awarded \$73,111 of New Freedom funding through the second round to purchase a new accessible vehicle and operating costs associated with providing work mobility between their Day Resource Center (DRC), the congregations utilized as shelter for homeless families, day care and job sites in Travis and Williamson Counties. A draft agreement was presented last summer and Capital Metro and FFH have been working together since then to finalize the agreement and procurement information, exploring options based on

budget, for the new vehicle. The final agreement has been presented and is pending execution, scheduled to be completed by as early as this week or next week at the latest. They are also seeking bid information for their new vehicle and it is anticipated they will purchase within the next couple weeks. FFH's New Freedom service will provide: (1) access to work and work supports for working homeless and low-income families, many of whom also have a history of substance abuse, mental or physical health issues; and (2) more access to IHN for persons with disabilities. Also by purchasing the new accessible vehicle, FFH will be able to shuttle clients from congregational shelters and the Day Resource Center to day care and work in locations or on schedules that are difficult to manage or beyond the scope of public transit services.

Easter Seals Central Texas (Easter Seals) submitted applications through both rounds to purchase a new accessible vehicle and initiate job access and reverse commute services between the agency's North East Austin Workforce Center on McPhaul Street and worksites in Williamson County and initiate an additional program that provides transportation services for its clients with disabilities in Travis and Williamson Counties to travel to and from the agency's Austin and Round Rock clinics to receive medical rehabilitation services. Easter Seals was awarded a total \$189,370 of JARC funding to purchase a new accessible vehicle and operating costs to initiate and provide service for these programs. The agreement was supposedly sent last summer but recently it was brought to our attention that the agreement was not received. Easter Seals is now in receipt of the agreement which identifies both programs and total funding awarded. It has also been identified that the service initially proposed for North East Austin will instead be the agency's South Austin Workforce Center on East St. Elmo Street. It is anticipated to have the agreement fully executed within the next week and begin purchasing the vehicle this month. The program projects will provide access to employment opportunities for a hard to employ population and medical reverse commute services for adults with physical disabilities, a history of substance abuse, and mental health issues. By purchasing the new accessible vehicle, Easter Seals will be able to shuttle Paid Job Training employees from the location in south Austin that is well known to and easily accessed by the client population to various suburban, often rural, worksites in Williamson County.