Community Transportation Pilot Program

March 2014
The Ministry of Transportation proposes to develop a pilot Community Transportation Grant Program

Program funding will support the partnering of community agencies that are currently providing transportation services in order to improve overall service through sharing of resources and coordination of activity.

The pilot Community Transportation project will help to:
- Address the transportation needs of small municipalities and rural areas; 
- Assist community agencies in meeting growing demand for accessible transportation;
- Assist communities in filling transportation service gaps; and
- Address the transportation recommendation in Dr. Sinha’s report *Living Longer, Living Well*.
The objectives of the pilot program are to:

- Facilitate resource-sharing among transportation providers within communities in order to provide more rides using existing resources more efficiently;
- Accumulate experience at meeting the needs of seniors and rural communities in regards to community transportation; and
- Determine the effectiveness of this kind of grant program at achieving results.
Program Description

- Invite community agencies to form partnerships and apply for funding to coordinate their transportation services.

- Potential partners could include:
  - Social service agencies;
  - Health service agencies;
  - Volunteer organizations;
  - Public transit systems; and
  - Municipalities.

- The program will fund new coordination activities or enhancements to existing coordinated service that provide more rides and/or improve service. Funds can be used for capital or operating purposes such as:
  - Hiring a coordinator
  - Technology for single point of access to request and book rides
  - Technology to centralize scheduling and dispatch
  - Development of standard eligibility, common procedures

- The Pilot will be evaluated with funding recipients responsible for reporting on service improvements, such as number of rides, service hours, service area, wait times.
Program Requirements

☐ Program funding will flow through a municipality. Applications must be sponsored by a municipality or made by a municipality.

☐ Neither municipalities nor participating agencies will be required to contribute funding.

☐ To be consistent with provincial definition of public transportation, fares required to be charged for service.

☐ Community transportation programs may serve more than one municipality, i.e., provide county-wide, inter-city or shuttle service.

☐ As the Pilot provides one-time funding, a sustainability plan will be required.
Example of Community Transportation

Caller requests ride

1-800-number
Central office receives request, searches for available ride, books

Centralized scheduling software

Ride booked & provided

Agencies exchange data on ride schedules, vehicles, availability

Community Agency

Community Agency

Community Agency

Shared Resources
- Centralized booking & staff
- Centralized marketing of service
- Ride/trip data
- Common scheduling software
- Ride requests/trips

Features
- Agency autonomy
- Data access & exchange
- Potential for standard fare
- Improved customer service, utilization
Community Transportation Benefits

Improved Service to Community
- Potential to provide more rides, more service while containing costs
- Potential to free up staff to provide other services or focus on agency’s core mandate
- Potential to meet increase in transportation demand
- Serves areas with no or insufficient public transit

Benefits to Community Agencies/Organizations
- Flexible delivery model
  - Community partnerships choose their level of coordination
- Agencies retain vehicle ownership, drivers, individual funding
The Ministry of Transportation will continue to consult with potential stakeholders of this initiative, including Ontario municipalities, social-service agencies, community-transportation providers, and school-bus operators.

These consultations will help to inform design and development of the program: eligibility requirements, application process, and project evaluation metrics.

The Ministry expects to launch the program in Fall 2014.
For more information, please contact:

○ Jeannie Lee
  • jeannie.lee@Ontario.ca
  • 416.585.6216

○ Barbara Breston
  • barbara.breston@Ontario.ca
  • 416.585.7303

○ Andrew Miller
  • andrew.m.miller@Ontario.ca
  • 416.585.7488