

# **ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

## **RURAL TRANSIT DISTRICT**

### **WORK PLAN FOR THE**

### **REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATION PLAN**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

House Bill 3588 stated “To eliminate waste and maximize efficiency, the department shall encourage public transportation providers to agree on the allocation of specific services and service areas among the providers.” The Texas Transportation Commission formed a Study Group whose mission is to review current public transportation planning and programming practices within the metropolitan, suburban, and rural areas to enhance service delivery, customer satisfaction and effective and efficient services. The decision of the Study Group was that in order to develop the plans that the council of governments’ boundaries would serve as the service areas, and each area would develop its own plan. The Ark-Tex Council of Governments region serves the following nine counties in Northeast Texas: Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, and Titus. The region covers 5,830 square miles, with an estimated population of 271,468.

A Stakeholders Meeting for the Ark-Tex COG service area was held September 20, 2005, in Mt. Pleasant, Texas. A total of 71 stakeholders were invited to attend this meeting. At this meeting, Stakeholders in attendance voted to designate the Ark-Tex Council of Governments as the Lead Agency. Several agencies throughout the Ark-Tex region have provided letters of support, which are attached to this Work Plan. The Stakeholders also adopted a draft of the Scope of Services for development of the Regional Transit Coordination Plan.

#### **GOAL:**

The goal of the Regional Transit Coordination Plan is to develop a plan for a system that will address the public transit needs of the Ark-Tex region. Stakeholder partners will include transportation providers, such as the rural transit provider, small urban provider, community-based organizations and community action agencies; Metropolitan Planning Organization, other public agencies; private non-profits; consumers; and other interested parties.

#### **TASKS:**

The Ark-Tex Council of Governments will release a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a contractor to develop the Regional Transit Coordination Plan after approval by the Stakeholders. After a Contractor is selected by a Committee of ATCOG staff, the

Contractor will be required to develop the Plan over a ten-twelve month period. The Contractor will be tasked with the following:

#### Work Task 1

1. Conduct meetings in each of the nine counties in the ATCOG region in order to identify:
  - a. All transportation services available in each of the counties;
  - b. Transportation needs by consumers and providers.
  - c. Existing gaps in services available vs. transportation needs.
2. Prepare a county-by-county summary of services available vs. transportation needs and existing gaps. Submit report to ATCOG.

#### Work Task 2

1. Identify and review any existing coordination agreements between transportation providers in ATCOG region.
2. Develop and make recommendations for improving current coordination agreements to provide improved transportation services
3. Develop coordination agreements where current agreements do not exist.
4. Review guidelines and requirements of all programs to identify any barriers to coordination of services and programs.
5. Submit report to ATCOG regarding coordination agreements and recommendations for improved transportation services.

#### Work Task 3

1. Identify all projected costs to provide improved transportation services, to include operations, administration, and maintenance.
2. Identify potential sources of additional revenues in order to provide improved transportation services to consumers.
3. Submit report to ATCOG.

#### Work Task 4

1. Prepare Regional Transit Coordination Plan for the Ark-Tex COG area.
2. Submit draft of Plan to ATCOG.

3. Present plan to Stakeholder Group for approval.
4. Make any changes to plan recommended by Stakeholder Group.
5. Present final Plan to ATCOG.

ATCOG will submit the final Plan to Texas Transportation Commission within timeframe designated by the Commission.

**WORKING BUDGET:**

The estimated 12-month budget is as follows:

<b>LINE ITEM</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>
Salaries	\$8,000.00
Benefits	\$4,675.00
Indirect	\$3,675.00
Travel	\$3,500.00
In-Region	\$1,000.00
Out-of-Region	\$2,500.00
Rent	\$800.00
Telephone	\$300.00
Postage	\$500.00
Copier	\$600.00
Office Supplies	\$300.00
Contracts	\$125,000.00
Meetings	\$750.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$148,100.00</b>

Anticipated Sources of Funding:

ATCOG Medicaid Transportation Program	\$ 9,500.00
Metropolitan Planning Organization	1,000.00
North East Texas Opportunities Opportunities, Inc.	7,000.00
Northeast Texas Workforce Development Board	2,500.00
Texas Department of Transportation	5,000.00
	123,100.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$148,100.00</b>

**INVENTORY OF CONSTRAINTS:**

The following have been identified as constraints to the delivery of coordinated public transportation services:

1. Aged high-mileage vehicle fleet for the rural transit district. The transit district owns a total of 64 vehicles. The oldest vehicles in the fleet consist of twelve '92 models. Some of these vehicles have logged over 500,000 miles. Engines have been replaced in some of these vehicles. The transit district logged 4,801,476 vehicle revenue miles in FY 05.
2. Inadequate funding is available to provide the improved transportation services. Improved services will most likely require longer hours of service, additional drivers, and additional vehicles.
3. More intense driver training will be required in order to provide improved and additional services.
4. Lack of coordination between transportation programs on a state level in order to provide for locals to provide coordinated services. Example: Medicaid transportation and 5311 rural transportation program – Medicaid client not able to purchase groceries at local Wal-Mart while waiting for prescription to be filled.